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The first of seven articles in this issue on Southeast Asia points out that "For the United States now, the politico-strategic significance of South Vietnam has been reduced. With American air- and sea-lift capabilities in the area greatly increased and now widely recognized by the leaders of other Southeast Asian states as a result of the Vietnamese war, their instinctive nationalism has been reasserting itself and they do not regard communism as the wave of the future."

The Political-Strategic Significance of Vietnam

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ON MARCH 31, 1968, President Lyndon Johnson announced he would not run for reelection and that he was ordering a cessation of the bombing of North Vietnam above the 20th parallel. This move opened the way for the Paris talks between the United States and the Hanoi government. On October 31, 1968, President Johnson ordered a cessation of all bombing north of the demilitarized zone, in the belief that the Hanoi government was ready to get down to the serious business of a settlement of the war. The government of President Nguyen Van Thieu balked, however, and not until November 26 did it agree to send a Saigon delegation to join the peace negotiations in Paris.

These developments, which marked an about-face by both Hanoi and Washington, provide a fresh opportunity to assess the politico-strategic significance of the two Vietnams. Are these two pieces of territory under different governments of *paramount* importance to the United States, or to the U.S.S.R.

or to Communist China? Or are these states hostages or pawns in a larger game of power politics in Asia?

For more than a decade, the political and strategic significance of the two Vietnams in the three-cornered contest between the United States, the U.S.S.R. and Communist China has been obscured in Washington, Moscow and Peking by official rhetoric which has escalated along with the war. If each government believed what its high officials and propaganda organs were saying, a much larger war in Southeast Asia would have been inevitable. Fortunately, none of the three major protagonists was willing to make its rhetoric effective; thus, hopefully it may be possible to reach a peaceful settlement of a costly and bloody war, a war that has divided Americans with a bitterness that will not easily be forgotten.

As a new administration begins to function in Washington, it may be useful to attempt to appraise the political and strategic significance of the two Vietnams for the three major

powers concerned, in terms of the future of the region we call Southeast Asia.

The boundaries of the two Vietnams were delineated by the French when they established the Indo-China union at the end of the last century. The present division of North and South Vietnam was effected at Geneva in 1954 as a "provisional" demarcation at the 17th parallel, subject to future alteration after a "free election" scheduled for 1956. This election did not take place. Consequently, North Vietnam's President Ho Chi Minh has never given up his long-range objective of uniting the two Vietnams under his sponsorship, nor have successive Saigon governments given up their opposition to Ho's objective. It is also obvious that after long years of fighting in the South, Ho is nearer to his goal of a united Vietnam under his auspices and that the Saigon government is fighting a desperate battle for independence.

However Moscow or Peking or Washington describes the war, Vietnamese have been fighting Vietnamese for 22 years. At the start, the anti-Communist Vietnamese were led by France and her Expeditionary Force, which fought against Ho's forces in the North and the South. Ho Chi Minh and his forces were supported first by Nationalist China and, increasingly after 1949, by Communist China and to some extent by the Soviet Union. After the Geneva Conference of 1954, the United States took over the role of France in support of an anti-Communist government in the South. And as fighting began to spread in South Vietnam after 1959, the Soviet Union began increasing its aid to North Vietnam along with Communist China.

Therefore, since 1954, South Vietnam can be regarded as a "client" state of the United States and North Vietnam as a "client" state with two sponsors, the U.S.S.R. and Communist China. In the terminology of international politics before World War II, North and South Vietnam might have been described as "protectorates" or "protected" states, but such nomenclature is too reminis-

cent of the days of "imperialism." Similarly, to call North Vietnam a "satellite" of either the U.S.S.R. or of Peking would be misleading and inaccurate, since there is little comparison between North Vietnam and either Czechoslovakia or Tibet. In fact, in the case of both Vietnams, there is a "client-sponsor" relationship and each Vietnam has been subsidized or aided in a variety of ways by outside powers to maintain her separate existence. The exigencies of war and international politics plus the aggressive political warfare capability of the North Vietnamese regime have forced the United States to give far more in men, money and materials to South Vietnam than North Vietnam has received from her two sponsors. It is valid, therefore, to ask the question: is this in reality a civil war, with each side getting support from outside nations, as was the case with the Spanish Civil War?

The details of United States support for South Vietnam and her succession of governments will undoubtedly keep historians busy for decades to come but it does seem clear that over the past three or four years the American people have become increasingly confused as to why Americans are fighting in Vietnam. This confusion can be illustrated by quotations from a speech President Johnson delivered on September 29, 1967.¹ In this speech, the President asked,

Why should three presidents and the elected representatives of our people have chosen to defend this Asian nation more than 10,000 miles from American shores? We cherish freedom—yes. We cherish self-determination for all people—yes. We abhor the political murder of any state by another and the bodily murder of any people by gangsters of whatever ideology. And for 27 years—since the days of lend-lease—we have sought to strengthen free people against domination by aggressive foreign powers.

But the key to all we have done is really our own security. . . . Eisenhower said in 1959, "Strategically South Vietnam's capture by the communists would bring their power several hundred miles into a hitherto free region. The remaining countries in Southeast Asia would be menaced by a great flanking movement. The freedom of 12 million people would be lost immediately and that of 150 million in adjacent lands would be seriously endangered. The loss

¹ Speech before the National Legislative Conference, San Antonio, Texas. Text in *Department of State Bulletin*, October 23, 1967, pp. 519-521.

of South Vietnam would set in motion a crumbling process that could, as it progresses, have grave consequences for us and for freedom."

... Kennedy said in 1962 . . . "withdrawal in the case of Vietnam and in the case of Thailand might mean a collapse of the entire area." A year later Kennedy reaffirmed that, "We are not going to withdraw from that effort. In my opinion for us to withdraw from that effort would mean a collapse, not only of South Vietnam, but Southeast Asia. So we are going to stay there."

I am not prepared to risk the security—indeed, the survival—of this American nation on mere hope and wishful thinking. I am convinced that by seeing this struggle through now we are greatly reducing the chances of a much larger war—perhaps a nuclear war. I would rather stand in Vietnam in our times, and by meeting this danger now and facing up to it, thereby reduce the danger for our children and for our grandchildren.

... There is progress in the war itself . . . the campaigns of last year drove the enemy from many of their major interior bases. The military victory almost within Hanoi's grasp in 1965 has now been denied them. The grip of the Viet Cong on the people is being broken.

As the above quotation shows, United States policy continued to focus on South Vietnam as the key—the linchpin—in the protection of Southeast Asia from Communist expansion. The "domino theory" assumed that the loss of South Vietnam would cause other states in Southeast Asia to topple before Communist domination. But this theory was never wholly valid, and concentration of United States attention on South Vietnam ignored developments elsewhere, as a brief look backward at the crisis years of 1960–1965 will show.

LAOS AND THAILAND

Beginning in 1959, the government of landlocked Laos showed signs of coming apart. The Pathet Lao Communists, organized and trained by the North Vietnamese and supplied with arms by a Soviet airlift, showed signs of gaining control over more and more of Laos. During 1960–1961, a series of government crises almost led to Pathet Lao capture of the administrative capital at Vientiane. Alarmed, the United States airlifted 5,000 troops into northeast Thailand

along the Laos border and began a steady build-up of bases and an increasing flow of war materials to Thailand. The Laos crisis was settled at the Geneva Conference in 1962, in a settlement providing for a tripartite government in Laos and withdrawal of all foreign military forces from the country. For the first time, the United States sat around the conference table with representatives from both Communist China and North Vietnam.

The Laos settlement had two major results. First, it left territory along the South Vietnamese border in the hands of the Pathet Lao and secured supply routes from Hanoi into South Vietnam. Second, and more important, it made Thailand a base of military operations for the war in Vietnam. It was during the Laos crisis of 1960–1961 that United States Secretary of State Dean Rusk officially declared that the United States would protect the territorial integrity and independence of Thailand, a unilateral guarantee that still stands.

In Indonesia, the largest state in Southeast Asia, with the largest Communist party outside the Communist bloc, President Sukarno had mortgaged his armed forces to the Soviet Union for arms aid, but the Indonesian Communist party, the P.K.I., became increasingly oriented toward Peking. Communist China's attack on India in the fall of 1962 had seemed to signal a new aggressiveness by Peking, and Indonesian Communists were regular visitors to Communist China. In Burma, too, the Chinese Communists made headway. Following a military seizure of the government in March, 1962, the new Burmese "Revolutionary Council" eliminated as much Western influence as possible, gratefully accepting an \$81-million credit from Communist China that brought increasing numbers of Chinese technicians into the country. Cambodia, too, moved closer to Peking.

In 1963, Communist China moved more rapidly to consolidate her gains. There was talk of a "Peking-Djakarta axis." This seemed to fit into Peking's strategy when Sukarno moved to an armed "confrontation" with the enlarged Malaysia, in a period of

guerrilla warfare that caused the British to send as many as 50,000 troops to defend Malaysia. In the spring of 1963, Liu Shao-ch'i, President of the Chinese People's Republic, took his only trip to date out of China, significantly visiting Indonesia, Burma, Cambodia and North Vietnam. In each capital, an almost identical communiqué was issued affirming each nation's long lasting friendship with Communist China and denouncing United States "imperialism" as a menace to the security of all the states in Southeast Asia. It appeared that Communist China was moving to build a coalition in Southeast Asia, to counter the United States sponsored SEATO (South East Asia Treaty Organization). This "flanking movement" by the Communists did not follow the defeat of South Vietnam, but was possibly developed in anticipation of the defeat.

In 1964, and into 1965, the United States was faced with a steadily worsening crisis in South Vietnam. The possible collapse of the Saigon government and the low morale within the South Vietnamese army, coupled with increasing pressure from the Vietcong and from Hanoi's southward moving forces, induced Washington to begin the bombing of the North and the rapid escalation of American ground forces in the South. Again, with United States attention riveted on the course of the war in Vietnam, the escape of other Southeast Asian nations from the Communists went almost unnoticed.

On September 30, 1965, an abortive Communist seizure of power in Indonesia was met quickly by the Indonesian army. Nearly 500,000 persons were killed in the outbreaks that followed, and Sukarno was eased out of power. The embryonic Peking-Djakarta axis was broken, and both Burma and Cambodia began to cool to the blandishments of Peking. During the same period, the Chinese Communist efforts to build a pro-Peking Asian-African grouping led to failure after failure. It would be fair to say that by the end of 1965, Chinese Communist foreign policy was in disarray and the Sino-Soviet dispute was becoming more vitriolic.

By the beginning of 1966, Indonesia had

ended her confrontation with Malaysia, and the economic success stories of Japan, South Korea and Taiwan under non-Communist governments proved that neither Moscow nor Peking had the final answers to economic development.

The above review indicates that however high a value United States policy-makers from President Dwight Eisenhower through President Johnson placed on South Vietnam in political or strategic terms, events and circumstances over which the United States had little control changed the whole basis for these earlier assumptions. In effect, the United States braced Thailand, one of the Southeast Asian dominoes. Then Indonesia, Burma, and Cambodia eased out from under Peking dominance largely by their own efforts. The United States needed only to disengage itself from South Vietnam, a process which began in 1968. Because of Communist China's foreign policy failures and the turmoil of her cultural revolution, regardless of what happens in South Vietnam, the other nations of Southeast Asia will try to resist Communist influence.

This brief review makes it possible to assess more objectively the present political and strategic value to the United States of the two Vietnams. It should be emphasized that at no time has the United States government desired the destruction of North Vietnam or the Hanoi regime. Controlled bombing in the North without land attacks into North Vietnamese territory have been designed to weaken Hanoi's will to continue the war. Indeed, President Johnson's speech at the Johns Hopkins University in 1965 made it clear that a peaceful, non-aggressive North Vietnam would be welcome to participate in the peaceful economic development of Southeast Asia in cooperation with other nations. The true value of North Vietnam to the United States has been and is that of a buffer territory serving to prevent a direct confrontation between the United States and Communist China or the Soviet Union.

In view of the shift of United States policy toward active negotiations for a settlement of the war in Vietnam, it would appear that the

United States might also regard a future South Vietnam government—even one dominated by the National Liberation Front (N.L.F.)—as a buffer territory between Communist China and the states of Southeast Asia to the south. This would require a clearer definition of the meaning of Communist aggression and a greater recognition of the essential feelings of nationalism of the peoples of Southeast Asia. Overt, large-scale aggression by Communist China beyond her southern borders would undoubtedly draw a quick United States response in terms of the times and circumstances. But it is doubtful that South Vietnam will again occupy a key position in United States policy and strategy in Southeast Asia or be regarded as a territory that must be held hostage to an imagined Communist expansionism.

For the United States now, the politico-strategic significance of South Vietnam has been reduced. With American air- and sealift capabilities in the area greatly increased and now widely recognized by the leaders of other Southeast Asian states as a result of the Vietnamese war, their instinctive nationalism has been reasserting itself and they do not regard communism as the wave of the future.

But there are two other powers with important interests in the area—China and Soviet Russia. How do the two Vietnams fit into their picture of international politics in the Southeast Asian region?

For the Soviet Union, North and South Vietnam have had a primary political value. North Vietnam is a Communist state, and it has been apparent all along that the Soviets could not afford to stand by while the Hanoi regime suffered a military defeat. Hence, there has been a steady flow of sophisticated war materials to the Hanoi regime from the Soviet Union and East European countries by sea through Haiphong and overland by rail through Communist China. At no time, however, has the Soviet Union placed such a high value on North Vietnam as to risk confrontation with the United States. The men in the Kremlin, as well as those in Hanoi or Peking, are aware that a war effort may be-

come counterproductive and are willing to shift their strategy to the long haul of slow subversion, confident they will win in the end.

After 1960, as the split between the U.S.-S.R. and Communist China steadily widened, the Soviets had an obvious political interest in supporting the Hanoi regime as a counter to any spread of Chinese Communist influence. A North Vietnam firmly under the heel of Peking would represent a setback for Moscow in the larger contest between the two giants of the Communist world. The U.S.S.R. tends to view North Vietnam as a buffer against Chinese Communist expansion as long as it can maintain its influence in Hanoi. Ho Chi Minh was quick to approve the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. Handicapped by distance, the Soviet Union, nevertheless, has demonstrated it can exert considerable influence far from its center of power.

Finally, what is the view from Peking? Is the struggle for South Vietnam a supreme test for the theory that wars of national liberation must be made to pay off, as Mao has said? Or is China so convulsed by the cultural revolution that Peking's vision is clouded? Are the Chinese leaders not yet capable of assessing the political or strategic value of the two Vietnams in terms of their long-range interests?

Like the Soviet Union, Peking cannot afford to see a Communist state wiped out on its very borders. (The Chinese Communists proved this in Korea.) North Vietnam, however, is of much greater political and strategic value to Communist China than to the Soviet Union. As the Chinese see it, the United States, with its massive military effort in South Vietnam, is engaged in a sinister collusion with the Soviet Union to encircle and strangle the People's Republic of China. North Vietnam, for the Chinese Communists, is not only a buffer against United States power, but is also a potential springboard for more active intervention in Southeast Asia should the opportunity offer and should Peking desire to take the consequent risks.

The view of South Vietnam from Peking

resembles the view from Hanoi. As the Communists see it, in South Vietnam, a people's war of national liberation is in progress, led by the Vietcong and the National Liberation Front, the only "true" representatives of the people in the South. Ho Chi Minh's desire to reunify the two Vietnams is applauded in Peking, and the Communists have complete faith in their ultimate victory.

Communist China, however, does not have a completely free hand in Hanoi. Not only has the Hanoi regime demonstrated its independence, but the Russians have influence there, too. The full story of the maneuvering of these Communist powers for influence over the Hanoi government may never be known, but there is little doubt that it continues. Peking could not see North Vietnam—and potentially South Vietnam—become a Soviet sphere of influence any more than it could tolerate a United States attempt to help South Vietnam take over the North.

What the Chinese Communists most desire is to force the United States (with its military forces and its bases) out of Southeast Asia. They are still far from their objective. They do not place such a high political or strategic value on North or South Vietnam that they would risk a war with the United States. In the meantime, North Vietnam serves as a buffer for Peking's security; hopefully, the addition of a neutral South Vietnam would widen this buffer belt.

There is no doubt that the future of South Vietnam and the terms of any eventual peace settlement are of real concern to the three major powers involved—Communist China, the United States and the U.S.S.R. But Asia will not be won or lost by what happens in Vietnam. The three-power contest for influence extends to all of Southeast Asia and beyond. In this sense the states of Southeast Asia are pawns in a three-way contest. To date, none of the three big powers believe that a war over Asian territory between any two of them or involving all of them is worth the risks and the costs.

For the states of Southeast Asia, however, this three-power contest is full of uncertainty. The Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia and

the doctrine of intervention voiced by the Kremlin make Soviet foreign policy harder for Southeast Asians to evaluate. The leaders of all the Southeast Asian states are as unsure as leaders elsewhere about the future course of Communist China. They see reports of Chinese Communist assistance to insurgents in Nagaland and to the Kachins and Shans in northeast Burma, and note that this kind of trouble-making in their area has not lessened.

And in Washington, a new administration has taken office and its precise policy towards Asia is still untested. Southeast Asians are fearful that United States concern for Southeast Asia will diminish and that the United States will be far less willing to assist states subject to Communist infiltration.

The task of the administration in Washington, thus, will be to extricate the United States from involvement in a long and costly war. This must be managed in such a way that a strong United States presence will still be felt in Southeast Asia, more discreet, less obtrusive, yet visible enough to assure the Southeast Asians that they will not be abandoned as the pawns in a two-power struggle between Communist China and the Soviet Union.

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"The obstacles to establishing a viable non-Communist South Vietnam in the time that lies ahead are considerable . . . there is no anti-Communist—or non-Communist—national political organization of any significance."

The Many-Sided Politics of South Vietnam

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THE CONCEPT OF "two Vietnams" has been criticized by those who claim that there is really only one Vietnam, however unfortunately (and temporarily) divided. Successive United States administrations have steadfastly maintained, on the other hand, that there are in fact "two Vietnams"—one of which (the North) attacked the other (the South). But there is still another point of view: that there are several Vietnams.

The approaching end of the war between the two conventionally conceived Vietnams was signalled by President Lyndon B. Johnson's announcement of a halt to all bombing of North Vietnam on October 31, 1968, and by the preliminary peace talks involving the United States and North Vietnam that began in Paris in May, 1968. It had long been realized that there could be no end to the Vietnamese war without either the formal or tacit agreement of the United States and North Vietnam. Once these two parties had agreed to terminate their struggle, however, the role of the local—that is, Southern—antagonists in the South Vietnamese political conflict assumed greater importance.

Subsequently, the concept of the "two Vietnams" may well undergo its severest test. In one sense, there have been only two Vietnams fighting one another for the better part of the last ten years. Only one anti-Communist

Vietnam, the Saigon government (aided by the United States and five other countries), has been fighting the Communist Vietnamese, comprised of the joint, if not combined, forces of the insurgent Vietcong—the military arm of the National Liberation Front (N.L.F.)—and regular units of the North Vietnamese armed forces.

Politically, however, there are many factions, and this is where the concept of "two Vietnams" breaks down. Within South Vietnam itself there are two very important Vietnams territorially—repeatedly recognized in the claims of the extent of Saigon's military control. Throughout the decade, parts of South Vietnam have not been ruled by Saigon. In late 1968, the Thieu government claimed control over nearly 70 per cent of South Vietnam, alleging that the Communists—that is, the National Liberation Front—controlled no more than 10 per cent of the country.¹ This is probably an exaggeration. United States officials in Saigon admitted that the N.L.F. had conducted elections of so-called "revolutionary committees" in nearly 1,250 villages and hamlets during 1968. All of this clearly indicates the existence of two politico-territorial Vietnams within South Vietnam.

It would be a gross oversimplification, however, to recognize the existence of only these South Vietnams—the Saigon government and the Communist National Liberation Front. South Vietnam is, unfortunately, even more divided than this, although the other divisions

¹ Peter Braestrup (in *The Washington Post* of September 8, 1968) estimated that less than half of the Vietnamese in the countryside—where 60 per cent of them reside—live under government control.

do not generally possess territorial dimensions. The problem of Vietnam for more than a decade and a half has been the problem of multipronged disunion and disaffection. The military contest has been the arena for the forceful resolution of only the most important of these conflicts. The other struggles have ordinarily not been fought on the battlefield.

In fact, there are many different groups that struggle for power within what has come to be called South Vietnam, competing to fill the vacuum created when Ho Chi Minh's Communist Viet Minh forced the withdrawal of the colonial French in 1954. Their ideas of what kind of Vietnam they want differ dramatically, as in the case of the conflicting aspirations of some soldiers and most civilians, or many Buddhists and Catholics. In addition, there are conflicts between Northerners (largely, but not exclusively, refugees from the 1954 settlement) and Southerners, as well as among the Vietnamese and the non-Vietnamese—the montagnards, or hill-people, and the resident Chinese. Even within the military there have been major cleavages; while groups such as the armed Cao Dai and Hoa Hao religious sects have often sought aims incompatible with the aspirations of other Vietnamese. The conflict between Communist and non-Communist has frequently obscured these struggles, but they are important. There are Vietnamese—and some of them are most ardently anti-Communist—who still do not accept the legitimacy of any of the governments that followed the overthrow and murder of President Ngo Dinh Diem in 1963.

THE N.L.F. STRATEGY

The strategy of the National Liberation Front has been "to hit with both fists while

² For a report of an interesting interview see Alessandro Casella, "The Militant Mood," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, May 16, 1968, p. 345.

³ For a good analysis, see Charles W. Corddry's dispatch from Saigon in the *Baltimore Sun*, October 6, 1968.

⁴ Stanley Karnow, in *The Washington Post*, October 25, 1968.

⁵ Ton That Thien, in *Far Eastern Economic Review*, May 30, 1968, p. 463.

⁶ Stanley Karnow, in *The Washington Post*, November 1, 1968.

keeping the emphasis on the political struggle." The insurrection against the Saigon government was begun in late 1959 only "because we were obliged to," according to N.L.F. spokesmen, "since we had no chance of expressing our political views freely."² By agreeing to the preliminary talks with the United States that began in May, 1968, North Vietnam—but not necessarily the N.L.F.—seemed to be saying that it was time to re-emphasize the political and to deescalate the military. North Vietnam was clearly not leading from military strength, but she was seeking to take advantage of apparently growing war-weariness and opposition in the United States.³ There were differences even in Hanoi regarding the wisdom of this choice,⁴ but they were not so fundamental as those that characterized the N.L.F. reaction to the North Vietnamese decision.

North Vietnam apparently decided to launch its second major assault of the year to coincide with the start of the Paris talks in May. The Southern-led N.L.F. resented the order for such military action, which was premature in the light of its lack of preparedness. One of the top Vietcong military figures, the veteran and high-ranking Communist Colonel Tam Ha, defected to the Saigon government on the eve of the assault. Politically, however, what annoyed the N.L.F. leadership most of all was the decision of the North Vietnamese to negotiate directly with Washington, thus ignoring the Front's objective of forcing the United States to deal directly with the Vietcong as its primary military adversary and to treat the N.L.F. as the principal political party in any peace settlement.⁵ The first reaction of the N.L.F. mission in neighboring Cambodia to President Johnson's October 31, 1968, bombing halt announcement was one of obvious disappointment. Those N.L.F. representatives headed by Central Committee member Nguyen Van Hieu were most displeased at the prospect of sitting at the same conference table with the "Thieu-Ky-Huong clique."⁶

The N.L.F., however, clearly distinguishes between the leadership of the Saigon government and many "patriots" within "the puppet

government, army, and administration." A "patriot," as the N.L.F. leaders see it, is anyone who opposes the United States presence in Vietnam. N.L.F. leaders stated on the eve of President Johnson's bombing halt announcement that they would not "make a deal" with the "puppet" Saigon government because it was "only an instrument" of the United States. However, the N.L.F. would cooperate with "patriots"—even within the Saigon regime—in the formation of a government of national union.⁷ Such a coalition, according to Nguyen Van Hieu, the Front's chief representative in Cambodia, would have to conform to the political program of the N.L.F. Any South Vietnamese government that did not "satisfy the legitimate aspirations of the people" as reflected in the N.L.F. program, Hieu said, "would be overthrown."⁸

Whether the N.L.F. must lead, or even participate, in such a coalition is open to question. The Alliance of National, Democratic and Peace Forces which was formed earlier in the year could be used as an N.L.F. presence in any coalition government. The Alliance for National, Democratic and Peace Forces was first mentioned in Communist radio broadcasts at the time of the *Tet* (lunar New Year) offensive in late January, 1968.

The Alliance's leadership (if, indeed, it was its real leadership) was drawn from neither conspicuously anti-Communist nor pro-Communist sources. Professor Le Van Hao, son-in-law of a businessman linked with the economic interests of Mrs. Ngo Dinh Nhu—the well-known Madame Nhu of the Diem years—was announced as chairman of the Hué committee of the new political group. Mrs. Truong Vy, mother-in-law of a general heading the South Vietnamese political warfare department, and the Venerable Thich Don Hau, heir apparent to the controversial

militant monk Thich Tri Quang in Hué, were named deputy chairmen of the Hué committee. Chairman of the national committee, which comprised primarily intellectuals and professionals rather than politicians, was lawyer Trinh Dinh Thao, married to the daughter of one of Saigon's richest jewellers but also a one-time close friend of Nguyen Huu Tho, head of the N.L.F.⁹

The program of the Alliance of National, Democratic and Peace Forces was a less strident and more verbally conciliatory version of the 14-point N.L.F. program proclaimed in August, 1967. In particular, the program of the new grouping reflected far greater identification with South Vietnam as a country distinct from North Vietnam than did the earlier N.L.F. position. The August, 1967, N.L.F. program referred to the "northern part of our country" and described the "unity" of Vietnam as one of the underlying assumptions of the 1954 Geneva Accords.¹⁰ The Alliance for National, Democratic and Peace Forces, nonetheless, is clearly linked with the N.L.F.—which presumably brought it into being to broaden its political appeal as well as possibly to use it as a disguised substitute in any future coalition government.

That the N.L.F. is preparing for peace and the reemphasis of the political aspect of the multicornered struggle for ascendancy in South Vietnam is clear. Beginning with the start of the preliminary peace talks in Paris and continuing through President Johnson's bombing halt announcement, Vietcong agents held elections in 1,241 villages and hamlets in South Vietnam to bring into being a seemingly representative quasi-governmental structure that would be entitled to participation in any future coalition arrangement. The Vietcong claims control of 10 million of the 17 million people in South Vietnam and four-fifths of the total land area of the South—a claim clearly as exaggerated as Saigon's—and to have established "revolutionary administrations" in "almost all" of this territory. According to United States sources, however, some kind of higher-level Vietcong organization was established in 17 provinces, 38 districts, and five cities.¹¹

⁷ Alessandro Casella, in *Far Eastern Economic Review*, October 3, 1968, p. 9.

⁸ Stanley Karnow, in *The Washington Post*, November 8, 1968.

⁹ Beverly Deepe, in *The Christian Science Monitor*, May 8, 1968.

¹⁰ *The New York Times*, August 29, 1968.

¹¹ Joseph B. Treaster, in *The New York Times*, November 16, 1968.

SAIGON'S STRENGTH AND FEARS

Probably the key reason the government of President Nguyen Van Thieu immediately balked at participation in the expanded Paris talks was its fear of setting a precedent for the formation of a coalition government including the N.L.F.¹² Thieu was not opposed to direct talks with North Vietnam, but he did not want to strengthen in any way the political position of the N.L.F. in the South by accordinng it even such legitimacy as might be implied from participation in the Paris talks. The Saigon government, like the N.L.F., was not at all happy with the way in which the United States and North Vietnam agreed to enlarge the discussions. The reason was the same in both cases: even such a seemingly procedural decision could have political consequences.

The South Vietnamese attitude stemmed partly from a more modest appraisal of the political strength of the Saigon regime than either President Thieu or the United States offered publicly. In the year following the 1967 elections, the Thieu regime had clearly strengthened itself. It had come to be largely composed of native-born Southerners and was as independent of military domination as any South Vietnamese government since the overthrow of Diem. But apparently there was, nonetheless, a feeling that the regime was still not strong enough to battle directly with the N.L.F. This lack of confidence underlay Thieu's reaction to President Johnson's October 31, 1968, announcement of expanded talks. Peace might be near, but Thieu wondered whether his regime could survive.¹³

President Thieu's appointment in May, 1968, of one of his leading presidential rivals of the previous year, Tran Van Huong, as Prime Minister, broadened the base and

appeal of his regime, and aided him in his continuing contest for power with his more hawkish Vice President, Air Vice Marshal Nguyen Cao Ky. Ky's position was also undercut by Thieu's replacement of military officers loyal to Ky and his dismissal of various province and district chiefs appointed by Ky when he was Prime Minister.

It was in the context of his struggle with Ky and the latter's supporters, mostly soldiers, that Thieu asked General Duong Van Minh to come home. "Big Minh" had led the 1963 coup against Diem and had later sought exile in Thailand. Thieu's bid to "Big Minh" to return came at about the same time that North Vietnam was indicating to the United States at Paris that Hanoi wanted to do business with President Johnson while he was still in office.¹⁴ Thieu's action, accordingly, must be considered not only within the context of his struggle for power with Ky but also in the framework of a possibly approaching peace and Thieu's realization of the need for the greatest possible unity against the N.L.F. and the Alliance of National, Democratic and Peace Forces. Two days after "Big Minh's" return in October, President Thieu placed the country's armed forces on alert, apparently because of evidence that disgruntled elements within the military, possibly pro-Ky men, might use the recall of Minh to precipitate a crisis. However, there was no crisis.¹⁵

Thieu and Ky have been criticized in various quarters abroad for jockeying for power at a time when the nation's survival was at stake. The country's precarious condition could be invoked on Thieu's behalf, however, to justify the need to end weakening rivalries within the government and to bolster the regime for the inevitable political battle with the National Liberation Front. Besides seeking to undercut Ky's influence (partly because of his rival's harder-line posture towards negotiations), Thieu also sought to placate both Buddhist and Catholic leaders with at least some success. Having earlier given official support to the more moderate Tam Chau Buddhist faction, Thieu tried to appease the militant Buddhist group of Thich Tri Quang

¹² See Philip Potter, in *The Baltimore Sun*, November 3, 1968.

¹³ See Andrew Borowiec, in *The Washington Star*, October 27, 1968.

¹⁴ See Chalmer Roberts' account of North Vietnam's timing, in *The Washington Post*, November 3, 1968.

¹⁵ Donald Kirk, in *The Washington Star*, October 13, 1968.

by receiving some of its leaders. He appointed various politicians and officers who supported the late Ngo Dinh Diem to positions of influence and importance. As in the case of his decision to name Tran Van Huong, the respected former schoolteacher, to be Prime Minister, Thieu's aim was strength through reconciliation. Too frequently, however, he was not met even halfway.

President Thieu's July, 1968, release of Thich Tri Quang and four other Buddhist monks, detained "for their protection" since the *Tet* offensive, brought applause even from such moderate Catholics as Father Hoang Quanh (chairman of the Council of Religions), but its effect was subsequently negated by the re-arrest of Tri Quang who had failed to show up at a National Salvation Front rally. Thieu was making an effort but he, too, was have difficulty rising above clique-ridden Vietnamese politics.

BUDDHISTS AND CATHOLICS

There has been no effective reconciliation between Buddhists and Catholics in the years since the overthrow of Ngo Dinh Diem. President Thieu is more popular than Diem with some Buddhists, but the more militant Buddhists still strongly oppose him. The most militant Catholics are also in opposition, not least of all because of his seemingly softer posture towards negotiations than that of other leaders. The militant Buddhists greeted the approach of the Vietnamese New Year with an urgent plea to the government to end the war, a plea that was lost in the sudden explosion of the Communist *Tet* assault. The Buddhist position strangely paralleled that of Thieu in the wake of President Johnson's bombing halt announcement, expressing the fear that the United States would negotiate a separate peace with Hanoi and that such a peace might betray "us Vietnamese who have been victims of this cruel struggle." South Vietnam's 17 Roman Catholic bishops had earlier called for an end to the war, but a key group of Catholic refugees from the North simultaneously pledged to fight any

coalition government that included the Communists.

Both Buddhists and Catholics have been divided over the question of negotiating with the N.L.F. or joining in a coalition government with the Communists. The Buddhists, however, have been at such odds with one another that they have effectively neutralized Buddhism as a political force in South Vietnam. Seventy per cent of South Vietnam's 17 million people are Buddhists, and the two chief Buddhist factions—led by the militant Thich Tri Quang and the moderate Thich Tam Chau, respectively—have sought to attract followers partly in terms of the peace issue. The Tam Chau group, comprised to a significant extent of anti-Communist Buddhist refugees who fled from the North following the 1954 Geneva settlement, has been called a "tool" of the Thieu regime by the militants. The political importance of this Buddhist factionalization was indicated in August, 1968, when 40 deputies of the House of Representatives petitioned President Thieu to give legal recognition to the Tri Quang group (the Tam Chau organization had been endorsed by the government a year earlier as the sole legal Buddhist church). The Tam Chau moderates have accused the militants of being pro-Communist, and one of the leading members of the Tri Quang faction, Thich Don Hau, emerged in 1968 as one of the two vice chairmen of the N.L.F.-formed Alliance of National, Democratic and Peace Forces. The rivalry between the two Buddhist groups is no less keen than between Buddhists and Catholics in the old Diem days and hardly bodes well for the day when the war ends and the united Communists continue their campaign for conquest by political means.¹⁶

It is probably not accurate to label the Tam Chau Buddhists "hawkish"—particularly in the light of their midyear call for "immediate" mutual deescalation—but they are certainly harder-line than the Tri Quang group, which might even be called "neutralist" in the conflict with the Communists. It is perhaps not surprising that a harder line among both Buddhists and Catholics is gen-

¹⁶ Nguyen Ngou Rao, in *The Washington Post*, October 3, 1968.

erally taken by those who fled the North in 1945-1955. The chairman of the Council of Religions, Father Hoang Quanh, however, was an outspoken advocate of direct negotiations with the N.L.F., despite his Northern origin. Most Catholics in 1968, on the other hand, were probably still committed to the complete defeat of the Vietcong on the battle-field before talks—the call for the war's end by their bishops notwithstanding. The Catholics, like the Buddhists, are not the monolithic group that is sometimes suggested. Roman Catholics are represented in the legislature out of proportion to their numbers in the whole population—they represent 11 per cent of the Vietnamese people. But they are by no means a cohesive group on this and other questions. Buddhists and Catholics remain largely opposed to one another—and they are far more divided now than they were in 1963, the year of Diem's death.

THE DECISIVE COUNTRYSIDE

The *Tet* offensive at the start of 1968 had the effect of drawing soldiers, police, civil servants and revolutionary development teams alike into the district and provincial capitals. They returned to the rural areas only very slowly. Six months after the Communists' New Year's assault, local officials dared spend the night in only one-third of the hamlets categorized as "relatively secure." The effects of the *Tet* attacks on the long slow-moving pacification effort were extremely damaging. American and Vietnamese development activity was largely converted into reconstruction work.¹⁷

A good part of President Thieu's effort since the *Tet* campaign has been devoted to improving the cumbersome and complex Vietnamese governmental apparatus—not least of all to rooting out corruption, which has been no less an enemy than the Vietcong. Thieu removed 17 province chiefs, fired dozens of district leaders, and replaced hun-

dreds of lesser officials, large numbers of them on charges of corruption. On the other hand, the popular and legitimate qualities that many expected local government to develop after the 1967 elections have not evolved. Large numbers of village and hamlet committees elected in 1967 no longer function for a variety of reasons, including security.¹⁸

Partly out of necessity and partly for reasons of strategy, however, the Vietcong is largely concentrating its political effort today in the rural areas. A percentage of the rural peasantry, larger than the Saigon government is willing to admit, still lives under government rule by day but with the Communists present at night. Less than one-third of the country's police are deployed today at the district level or below. Non-governmental organizations, moreover, are even less effective than the official structure. The Buddhist church, for example, is much weaker in the countryside because of its split on the national level.

The obstacles to establishing a viable non-Communist South Vietnam in the time that lies ahead are considerable. But perhaps the most important of these are the divisions that still afflict the land. There is no nationwide pro-government counterpart either to the N.L.F. or to the more recently formed Alliance for National, Democratic and Peace Forces. In June, 1968, President Thieu called "political parties" the country's "infrastructure," while "the government, including both executive and legislature, is only its superstructure."¹⁹ The fact is, however, that there

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¹⁷ See Peter Braestrup, in *The Washington Post*, September 8, 1968.

¹⁸ See *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Lee Lescaze, in *The Washington Post*, July 1, 1968.

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In line with their tradition, ". . . when famine, plague, war or drought occurred, the Vietnamese believed the Emperor had lost his mandate [from heaven], and felt free to revolt. . . Vietnam was more experienced in peasant revolt than any other Southeast Asian state. . . There has scarcely been a century in Vietnam's history without political revolt."

North Vietnam Today and Tomorrow

BY KENNETH P. LANDON

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THE PRESENT STATUS and future outlook for North Vietnam depend on her internal political strengths and policies in relation to her external problems and ambitions. The Vietnamese were independent for 900 years or more after evicting the Chinese in 939 A.D. and before yielding to the French in the nineteenth century. They remember costly political struggles against two external foes, each of whom dominated them for extended periods of time and from whom relief was secured through violence.

The August, 1945, revolution against the French in Indochina was followed by nine years of struggle; after France's defeat, the colonial period finally ended with the Geneva Agreements in 1954. A principal provision divided Vietnam at the 17th parallel, pending 1956 elections for reunification. The elections were never held because the Ngo Dinh Diem government in South Vietnam refused to participate and the United States supported its refusal. The diverse twists and turns in United States policy and the political variations in South Vietnamese governments since 1963 have continued to frustrate Com-

munist plans for South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

In a series of lectures in September, 1968, by Truong Chinh, a leading Communist theoretician and one of the most influential members of the Central Committee in Hanoi, North Vietnam's major problems were defined as:

first to kick out the country-grabbing imperialists and achieve national independence . . . and second to overthrow the feudal landlords, achieve land reforms, and implement the "land of the tillers" slogan—that is the anti-feudal duty.¹

Traditional society had to be destroyed before it could be reconstructed. No element in society was spared; thus the Communists moved against such authority symbols as landlords, village notables who held hamlet control, and patriarchal family heads. The purpose was to destroy all traditional authority and values and to create a new authority and value system centered in the Lao Dong (Communist) party and the Central Committee.

DESTRUCTION OF A SOCIETY

How these moves began in the North have been described by Hoang Van Chi in *From Colonialism to Communism*, and in the writings of P. J. Honey and Bernard Fall, among others.² The cost in lives was probably comparable proportionally to the millions of lives destroyed in fashioning other Communist

¹ Truong Chinh's lectures were given at a conference convened by the Party's Central Committee to commemorate Karl Marx's 150th birthday anniversary.

² Hoang Van Chi, *From Colonialism to Communism* (New York: Praeger, 1964); see also Bernard Fall, in *Current History*, January, 1967, pp. 8 ff.

states. It was expensive to destroy a society. Economic leveling was achieved by making everyone poor. Traitors were identified and destroyed; a land reform program brought the rich to their knees or to their graves. The party then moved ahead by organizing the society into farmers' associations, workers' associations, women's groups for social, economic and even military action, and youth organizations for political-military operations.

In the South, where the Communists have had less freedom of action to engage in purges (although they have purged countless thousands at all levels of society), they have most recently held elections aimed at establishing the basis for a coalition government. By the end of October, 1968, the Vietcong had conducted elections of revolutionary committees to offset village notables in 1,241 villages and hamlets and had established higher-level provincial organizations in 17 provinces, 5 cities and 38 districts. These figures were derived from United States Embassy sources and so were not prejudiced in favor of the Communists. The purpose of the Vietcong liberation committees at all levels was to form a Communist governmental structure paralleling the structure of authority of the South Vietnam government. The Vietcong asserted that it controlled 10 million of the 17 million South Vietnamese and four-fifths of the land. The United States Embassy asserted that 69.8 per cent of the population was under the control of the South Vietnamese government.

All women Communists in the South are members of the South Vietnam Women's Liberation Association which was founded in 1961 and claims two million members. The organization is headed by Mrs. Nguyen Thi Dinh, a member of the presidium of the National Liberation Front, deputy commander of the Vietcong liberation army, and, in November, 1968, head of the delegation in Paris of the National Liberation Front.

Women have always played a tremendous behind-the-scenes role in traditional Vietnamese society and have held business responsibility. But the *form* of authority was always patriarchal, with the men holding the visible control and authority while the women

handled many substantive matters within the family. What is new is that women are now out of the family and openly involved in party lines of authority. In the South, the women have even been recruited for combat and guerrilla operations.

FROM CONFUCIUS TO MARX

Clearly, Vietnamese society in both the North and the South has been shaken severely for political purposes. One might well ask why so many of the Vietnamese people have tolerated such treatment at the expense of their traditional values and institutions. The answer, paradoxically, lies in their traditional way of life, patterned on Confucian doctrine learned from China. According to this doctrine, the Vietnamese developed a form of administration which depended on Confucian "wisdom" for the basis of authority or the "right to rule." Anyone who challenged this wisdom challenged the legitimacy of the government. It was not might, nor economic wealth, nor aristocratic birth, nor religious sanction, nor legal status that made right—but an approved "wisdom system" which was the foundation of the Vietnamese political and social institutions.

There was an orderly way of achieving status under the "wisdom system" of Confucianism and that was by taking examinations to demonstrate knowledge and so to become a mandarin, or to become eligible to become a mandarin—a person of status. Only the Emperor could select a mandarin, but even he could select only a scholar, a man of wisdom who knew the doctrine. Under this system of administration, the lines of authority were drawn through the mandarin system of command to the village notables and to the patriarchal heads of family.

In normal times, when the "wisdom system" was effective and life was orderly, the people accepted authority, and their role in the family, in the hamlet and in the mandarin system. The Emperor ruled because he had a mandate from heaven. But when famine, plague, war or drought occurred, the Vietnamese believed that the Emperor had lost his mandate and felt free to revolt. For this

reason, Vietnam was more experienced in peasant revolt than any other Southeast Asian state. In fact, for the ambitious who did not choose the slow, orderly and scholarly way to insure status, revolt was the way to success. There has scarcely been a century in Vietnam's history without political revolt.

When they conquered Indochina in the nineteenth century, the French offered no new "wisdom" that might have provided the basis for legitimatizing a government. On the other hand, they weakened some traditional institutions. Subsequently, in seeking to evict the French, Ho Chi Minh, the leading Vietnamese nationalist, turned to Marx-Leninism and to violence, believing that the French would never leave voluntarily. The traditional Vietnamese mandate of heaven had been lost under the French; the Vietnamese solution was to revolt and to seek a new "wisdom" with a new basis for authority.

In Ho Chi Minh's view, Marx-Leninism provided a new and effective doctrine for reorganizing society. Everyone would have a role to play, a responsibility under the authority of the Lao Dong party and the Central Committee, in a pattern compatible with a non-individualistic society. In a sense, the Vietnamese were offered a new version of their traditional, authoritarian society. Those who accepted and promoted the system gave the impression that they felt comfortable under it.

Even as a mandarin of the old school had to engage in the rectification of names, which amounted to reviewing his job description to find out what was expected of him, so the contemporary member of a Communist cadre must confess his faults and restudy his Marx-Leninism to be sure he knows what is expected of him. Those Vietnamese who welcomed communism probably believed that they had found a doctrine that they could learn and practice and be examined on, reminiscent of the old mandarin system. They believed that they had a sure way to overcome the inadequacies of their lives under the French.

The non-Communist elements in the South may have been less successful in uniting the

people behind the government, because they lack a new "wisdom," a theory that they can learn, study, believe and be examined on. And they lack a new authority under which everyone has a clearly defined role. A laissez-faire individualism involving individual rights, civil liberties and self-directed activities is hardly a match in a non-individualistic society for a political doctrine which is as precisely defined in relationships as Confucianism or as communism.

In his September lectures, therefore, Truong Chinh was appealing to Vietnamese tradition in describing the moves for refashioning Vietnamese society for political development, Communist style. He described the task of nation-building as a transition to socialism

leading the north to advance strongly and firmly to socialism, build an abundant and happy life in the north, and turn the north into a strong base for the struggle for peacefully achieving national unification. . . . To reach these goals, it is necessary to achieve the socialist transformation of peasants, artisans, small dealers, and liberal capitalist traders and industrialists, develop the state-owned economy, and achieve socialist industrialization by rationally developing heavy industry as a priority.

He recognized that the task was far from completed in 1968 and identified the lagging areas:

This is a protracted, hard, and complicated struggle. Such movements as the movement to suppress counterrevolutionaries, to develop democracy among the people, and to reform production relations, the technical revolution, and the ideological and cultural revolution are the content of this struggle.

Continuing conflict was vital: "The struggle between the socialist path and the capitalist path is still going on to determine definitely who will defeat whom." He acknowledged that even in the North the final outcome might still be in doubt.

In the north, the targets of the socialist revolution were those forces which opposed socialist reforms and the building of socialism in the north: the exploiters who refused to convert themselves, spies, commandos, bandits, reactionaries in religious disguise, reactionary parties and organizations.

Peaceful transition to success was not feasible and Truong Chinh therefore accepted the thesis that "the use of revolutionary violence . . . is the general rule."

HARDSHIPS OF WAR

While experiencing the transition to communism, North Vietnam was also on a war footing. In February, 1968, an *Agence France-Presse* correspondent, Bernard-Joseph Cabanes, who had made a 300-mile trip in the North through the mountain country from the foothills to the Laos border, reported the back-country had been developed for a long war and as a secure refuge for administrative, industrial, cultural, scholastic and health organizations. Roads had been opened; hospitals had been built; factories had been moved in from the delta; museums and precious objects had been put in caves. A high school with about 600 students was dispersed over several square miles with some classrooms underground. Factories for top-priority goods were installed in the mountains for farm tools, cement, paper, pottery and sugar. Mines were being worked for coal. People were harvesting cochineal shells for gum lacquer used in the manufacture of electric motors.³

William C. Baggs, editor of the *Miami News*, made a first visit to Hanoi in January, 1967, and a second in April, 1968. He noticed that on his first visit the rolling stock in the North's motor pool was impoverished in appearance, with old trucks disintegrating for lack of spare parts. In 1968, there were new and well-kept two-and-a-half-ton trucks in plentitude derived from the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Baggs counted 157 such vehicles while driving to Haiphong and then stopped counting because they continued to rumble by, heavily loaded with supplies from the ships in Haiphong Harbor. Along one short stretch of road he noted seven tractor-drawn rocket launchers and more than 30

³ *The New York Times*, February 24, 1968.

⁴ North Vietnam supported Soviet intrusion into Czechoslovakia even though China bitterly criticized Moscow for the move, seeming to indicate North Vietnam's need for Soviet support, or perhaps merely showing Hanoi's political independence of mind.

gasoline tank trucks and four heavy artillery pieces, all in new condition.

Because of the danger of bombing attacks, Hanoi was a city without children except on weekends. Retail trade existed both early and late in the day but not during the middle of the day. And private enterprise coexisted with Communist enterprise. Thus one could purchase rationed food at private markets flourishing on both sides of the road. Indeed, one could even buy French or Asian antiques from private shops. Such non-governmental enterprises operated openly and perhaps were one of the targets of Truong Chinh's criticism.

In the first half of 1968, there were "emulation campaigns" in which workers were spurred to greater effort. In the journal *Hoc Tap*, Premier Pham Van Dong warned that North Vietnam faced crucial tasks in 1968:

The communications and transportation branch has made unique innovations concerning technical equipment and technical improvements, proving that despite the war this work can be carried out. Why are the other branches not working like the communications and transportation branch? Why are heavy industry, light industry, construction, forestry, marine products, and so forth not able to do this? We must make the utmost effort to carry out this work. Small technical improvements, small steps forward in technical equipment when added together produce large results, and from small undertakings we will move forward to larger tasks every day.

In July, a North Vietnamese aid mission toured Moscow and East European capitals signing new aid agreements—the Moscow agreement amounting to about \$1 billion in value. It was noteworthy that Haiphong Harbor was more crowded than ever, with vessels unloading the Soviet supplies and equipment that Hanoi could not produce and that could not be obtained from China.⁴

By the middle of October, 1968, an atmosphere of success pervaded Hanoi. Thousands of children evacuated to rural areas had returned to Hanoi, creating an atmosphere of normality. Some 50,000 Chinese work troops who had been engaged in repairing the railroad lines running to Hanoi from Kun-

ming and Nanning had been withdrawn to South China for the most part, their work completed and the lines in running order.

The Doumer Bridge, a major artery out of Hanoi to the South, was operating normally, and alternative pontoon bridge work had been removed. There was heavy rail traffic from China to Hanoi and truck traffic from Haiphong and Hanoi to the South. Haiphong Harbor facilities were being urgently expanded. Sixty per cent of the bridges that had been destroyed by bombing in the North had been reconditioned. Most main roads had been hard-surfaced. The chief steel fabrication center at Thainguyen, northwest of Hanoi, had been almost completely restored for normal production.

Most important, however, was the optimistic atmosphere among the people. The general feeling was that the war was virtually won. What had been won on the political-military battlefield would be confirmed at the conference table in Paris.

NEW MILITARY TACTICS

North Vietnam's military strength had been clearly evidenced during the *Tet* (Lunar New Year) offensive. Military effectiveness at the *Tet* was enhanced by rockets, mortars and other arms supplied by the Soviet Union and Communist China. The North Vietnamese and Vietcong outgunned the South Vietnamese Army and almost equalled the ground fire of United States units. According to *The New York Times* columnist Hanson W. Baldwin, the North Vietnamese military had one of the best armed fighting forces in the world.

A 2,500 word editorial in the North Vietnamese Army newspaper, *Quan Doi Nhan Dan*, distributed in Saigon on March 4, 1968, asserted that

Our rear has become much stronger, our reserve in manpower and material more abundant, our revolutionary organizations and their abilities and room to maneuver much wider, and the conditions for the development of the people's war more favorable.

Allied estimates available March 20, 1968, put the *Tet* offensive strength of the North and their Southern allies at close to 600,000.

It was estimated that during the February phase of the offensive about 50,000 troops were killed, mostly North Vietnamese, and that by the end of February they had refilled their regular or main-force ranks, showing great resilience. In May, it was estimated that an additional 100,000 troops had infiltrated the South.

By the end of 1968, the North Vietnamese and the Vietcong had fragmented their battalion strengths under new directives, avoiding "contact" as much as possible. Big units were dispersed down to squad levels designed for small unit hit-and-run tactics. Main divisions had withdrawn to the Cambodian border or into Cambodia. One intelligence theory held that they were badly hurt and were regrouping. Another theory held that they were preparing for a major offensive against Saigon.

In any event, the military seemed to be preparing for the long haul of political-guerrilla warfare if they failed to secure a coalition government for Saigon by negotiations in Paris. One of their major objectives in the South was to coordinate the political infrastructures established in the urban areas during the *Tet* offensive with the rural infrastructures previously in existence, thus squeezing their enemy progressively out of political authority everywhere. As Truong Chinh said:

The national democratic revolutionary task is currently being implemented in the south. The policy of the South Vietnam National Liberation Front is to direct the spearhead of the struggle against the U.S. imperialists and their henchmen, the Thieu-Ky puppet regime, which represents the most reactionary classes in South Vietnam: the mercantile pro-American landlords and bourgeoisie. . . . The northern people are united in the Vietnam Fatherland Front while the southern people are united in the Na-

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Kenneth Landon was a missionary in Siam from 1927 to 1937. Since then he has been a consultant to several government departments, and has taught at universities in the United States and in Southeast Asia. He has also written widely on Southeast Asia.

"The Vietcong have . . . regularly taken steps to improve and modify their apparatus through constant reevaluation, grasping the military and political initiative when they see the opportunity, or bending with the wind. The target has always been the population: the operative phrase, 'power resides in the people.' The war has been fought to retain this control."

The National Liberation Front

BY PETER ARNETT
Associated Press, Saigon

THE 1968 *Tet* offensive that smashed through South Vietnam's cities and towns may well have been the Dien Bien Phu of the Second Indochina War. This blunt comparison is valid and important in that it recognizes that the climactic battle of the Vietnamese War has probably already been fought, that it was an irrevocable setback to Western hopes, and that it persuaded the United States dramatically to alter its goals in Indochina.

Only when viewed from this perspective do the current policies of the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam (N.L.F.), or Vietcong (as it is generally known), become truly significant. The war is regarded as incidental by the men behind the N.L.F., as a necessary diversion from the main struggle to dominate the broad mass of the population. The United States saw the war as the centerpiece of the struggle and attempted to win it, forcing the Vietcong to suspend political operations in 1966 to meet the challenge. Extensive documentation indicates that the Vietcong was less interested in military victory than in outlasting the United States challenge. An undecided contest could only benefit the Vietcong and discredit the United States.

The *Tet* attacks on the hitherto inviolate population centers of South Vietnam were logical tactics for the Vietcong to use to humble United States policy-makers. Logically, they followed the pattern of the encirclement and over-running of the fortress of Dien Bien

Phu 15 years before, to demonstrate to the French the uselessness of pursuing that Indochinese adventure. The climactic battles of both wars were as different as the differences in the wars themselves. The Vietcong contribution to the techniques of revolutionary warfare has been to establish zones of influence within government areas rather than outside, demanding no overt commitment from the peasantry but enlisting its help when required.

Whereas the Vietminh fought their decisive battle against a remote French base in their own zone of control, the Vietcong carried the fight to the heart of the city-strongholds, enlisting villagers ostensibly loyal to the government as guides, couriers and porters. Both battles dramatically illustrated to the West that years of punishing warfare had not substantially reduced the enemy's resourcefulness and stamina. French Premier Pierre Mendes-France liquidated French interests at once in 1954, ignoring the appeals of his hawkish generals who argued that they could continue to fight. United States President Lyndon Baines Johnson similarly ignored his hawks in 1968 and set the stage for a United States withdrawal.

North Vietnam after Dien Bien Phu differed considerably from South Vietnam after *Tet*. The Vietminh was a government and a revolutionary movement at the same time, and it seized power from the French through the people's councils that had developed at

all levels during the war as a parallel hierarchy. In South Vietnam, the significant fact of the N.L.F.'s existence was that it had failed to transform itself into a "liberation government." After years of conflict culminating in *Tet*, the political apparatus in the countryside was strained; the ranks of the soldiery were heavily depleted; and the cadres were reeling from the difficult tasks demanded of them.

What the bloody *Tet* gamble achieved for the Vietcong was not the right to govern, or even the immediate recognition of its role as a legitimate political force within South Vietnam. By crystallizing American distaste for the war, the Vietcong virtually guaranteed the departure of the United States from Vietnam, and once it had left it would not soon return. The finale might still be bloody but it would be undertaken by the Vietnamese themselves. The Vietcong had every reason to look favorably upon this eventuality.

The future path of the Vietcong in South Vietnam might be discernible from the landmarks of its past. After the Geneva peace talks, the Vietminh had a network of cells—tenuous, scattered but connected in many parts of South Vietnam. This organism fed on the forces of anarchy and revolution that are as traditionally strong in Vietnam as the government is weak.

There is no question that the Vietcong sprang fully blown into existence, one observer seeing it as a well organized steamroller crashing out of the jungle to flatten the Saigon government. The Vietcong was nationally conceived and organized with ample cadres and funds. These analyses were made after important documents were captured. The view from Saigon when I arrived in 1962 was that a phantom guerrilla structure, out in the paddyfields and distant jungles, existed only for propaganda purposes. The ubiquitous guerrillas in black skivvies who stole weapons and harassed remote government posts and villages at night had been conveniently labeled "Vietcong" (Vietnamese Communists) and judged bandits by a Ngo Dinh Diem regime still confident it could handle them.



Reprinted by permission from *An Atlas of World Affairs* by Andrew Boyd. Copyright, 1959, by Frederick Praeger, Inc. † Siam is now called Thailand.

INDOCHINA

None suspected that this phantom edifice would materialize and force the United States into its longest shooting war. Documents eventually showed that the Vietcong had reversed the normal order for building a front, first creating the structure on paper with a latticework of organizations, loudly proclaiming in January, 1961, that it had been formed a month earlier, then fleshing it out with real people later. The emergence of such an organization in the South was predictable after Ho Chi Minh settled reluctantly for only the Northern part of the country at the Geneva conference. The insurgency became a fact when the anti-Communist stance of President Diem placed the South on collision course with the North.

The white-hot pace of the war eventually made the Vietcong into the tenth front behind which the Indochinese Communist party has hidden over the years; the "faceless men" in leadership were in fact the familiar visages

of Ho Chi Minh and his Vietnamese Napoleon, Vo Nguyen Giap. Still debated is whether the Hanoi leadership deliberately planned the Southern insurgency, or whether it only reluctantly leaped on the wagon. The N.L.F. has a considerable Southern identity of its own and poured thousands of Southern recruits into the military meatgrinder before reinforcements flooded down from the North.

TWO VOICES OF THE VIETCONG

Some observers saw genuine nationalist aspirations among those allied with the Vietcong in the late 1950's, the motivation for a revolutionary explosion in South Vietnam enhanced by the tightening autocracy of Ngo Dinh Diem. The N.L.F. itself sometimes claims to be the child of non-Communist initiatives to overthrow Diem, entirely independent of the Hanoi government, harboring but not dominated by the Communists, and intent on establishing a liberal regime with a neutral foreign policy. But the N.L.F. has two voices, one seeking sympathy from the West for what it claims is a justifiable civil war, the other aimed at the Communist world and emphasizing the Front's Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy, reassuring the Communists that the Vietnamese struggle follows common Communist interests. Bales of documents captured in recent years and free-talking defectors of field-grade rank have detailed the unrelenting grip the Communist party has over the Vietcong at all levels, beginning with the top post of supervisor of all Vietcong military and political matters currently held by Southern-born Pham Hung (one of Hanoi's top politburo members and first Deputy Prime Minister of North Vietnam) down through the infrastructure to hamlet committees in remote Camau Province.

That no liberation government has been formed proves to some observers that the N.L.F. is a puppet of the North. Hanoi has deliberately underplayed the role of the publicly-announced N.L.F. leadership and has not been willing to allow the emergence of a Southern resistance personality around whom an independent leadership might coalesce. No meaningful publicity has even been given

the activities or speeches of any Southern Communist leader.

A revealing vignette on internal relationships within the Front was told by a defector, Lieutenant Colonel Le Xuan Chuyen, deputy chief of staff of the Vietcong's 5th Division, who was present at a meeting in the Tay Ninh jungles late in 1965 to assess the war. The meeting was addressed by the then supervisor of all Vietcong military and political matters, Nguyen Chi Thanh, a four-star North Vietnamese general. Attending were most members of the N.L.F. presidium, including Nguyen Huu Tho, a lackluster lawyer, possibly non-Communist but not a strong figure. Colonel Chuyen recalled that as General Thanh summed up his remarks, he turned to Tho and declared

You ask, Mr. Tho, is now not the time to negotiate and I say to you, Mr. Tho, go to your house, go inside and lock the door and go to sleep. Now is not the time to talk. Now is the time for the military hurricanes to sweep the jungles in victory. We will tell you when it is time to talk and then you will have the firm support of military victory.

Tho looked straight ahead, unblinking, Chuyen recalled, but the Communist cadres in attendance were nudging each other excitedly. One drove an elbow into Chuyen's ribcage as if to say, "That's telling him!" The incident illustrates the kind of control the experienced Vietnamese Communists hold over the N.L.F. Lawyer Tho is one of 34 central committee members of the Front who together claim to represent all the political, religious and tribal factions within Vietnam. Whatever it was that this group hoped for when it went into the jungles to plot the insurgency, a skilful, precise and all-powerful Communist machine came out.

The Communist machine is oiled with ideology, but it is run by organization, the gasoline of the Vietcong. Its communism guaranteed no assurance of success. It required an incredible output of work day and night to create and sustain the so-called infrastructure that is actually a subterranean government depending on a labyrinth of spies, propaganda agents, tax collectors and couriers. The Communists have been build-

ing this machiavellian apparatus in the backwoods of Vietnam for 30 years. In late November, 1968, I joined South Vietnamese special forces troops attempting to drive the Vietcong from caves it had occupied since 1938 on Mount Coto, one of the Seven Mountains of southwest Vietnam. Its soldiers were not dislodged. The Vietcong has also regularly taken steps to improve and modify its apparatus through constant re-evaluation, grasping the military and political initiative when it sees the opportunity, or bending with the wind. The target has always been the population; the operative phrase, "power resides in the people." The war has been fought to retain this control.

ALLIED BLUNDERS

The rise of the Vietcong was unquestionably aided by the incredible blunders of the Diem regime and the bland optimism of the United States political and military advisers then and in later years. By repudiating the traditional village elections in 1956, Diem encouraged an intensification of clandestine political activity in the countryside, giving the insurgents an obvious grievance. By continuing to exploit the administrative weaknesses of the government in the countryside and the political grievances in the towns, the Vietcong developed widely scattered centers of opposition to Diem.

When these centers began to make themselves felt, the N.L.F. was organized to bring them together. From then on, development was rapid. By mid-1961, the Ho Chi Minh trail was functioning, and way stations of thatched-roof homes on canals or patches of jungle were being used to feed, pass and guide along large groups of men moving from province to province. Diem's security system collapsed along with his government late in 1963, enabling the Vietcong organization to receive, conceal, feed and deploy reinforcements from the North Vietnamese army. A law of guerrilla war is that the amount of infiltration depends on the capacity of the insurgent movement within a country to receive and absorb it. And if an insurgency expands, effective infiltration will increase,

whatever measures may be taken to reduce it.

This was the pattern of the middle period of the Vietnamese war, paralleled by United States reluctance to control the strategy and course of the war, or even to establish joint control machinery. Coordination between Americans and Vietnamese or between military operations and civilian measures were lacking and often non-existent.

Lined up against the succession of ineffective Saigon governments was the monolithic, single-minded Communist apparatus that flourished in the chaos. Only when the United States threw large combat forces into the conflict in 1965 and the following years, did the Communists pause in their political endeavor and divert every effort to survival in the war, judging correctly that while a succession of inconclusive battles would dismember their own ranks, these same battles would surely wear down the resolve of the United States. By the middle of 1968, the Communists were returning to the political route they had temporarily deserted. They still exhorted the faithful to fight on to the end, and to seek the general uprising that would magically bring them to power, but this sounded like polemic to sustain cadre morale and retain the initiative in the countryside. The anonymous tacticians, anticipating an end to the big war, set about achieving the real purpose, building a facade of legitimacy on the N.L.F. It was the next logical step in the evolution of the Communist insurgency.

Three days before President Johnson announced the full halt to the bombing of North Vietnam last November, American infantrymen sloshing through the flooded paddies of the Mekong Delta apprehended a Vietcong courier who carried a satchel full of documents extensively detailing to all cadres the measures to be taken when the bombing halt was announced. The Communists were completely organized to meet the bombing halt and to exploit it. On the other hand, the Saigon government blandly insisted that no such halt would occur. Only six weeks later did Saigon make tentative attempts to catch up in the propaganda battle.

The Vietcong nerve endings that twitch in

outbursts of terrorism on the streets of Saigon and stealthy visitations upon lonely hamlets at night, lead upward through a pyramidal body of infrastructure to the Central Office of South Vietnam (COSVN), the top command post for Communist activities in the South with responsibility for all Vietcong political and military activities. COSVN is super secret, but enough is now known about it through captured documents and defectors to prove that this is the heart of the Vietcong body. The brain is the Hanoi Communist politburo, a radio-phone call distant from the mobile COSVN command post that locates itself along the Tay Ninh jungle border with Cambodia, housed in a series of underground shelters with escape tunnels.

COSVN's key members belong to the politburo of the North Vietnamese Communist party and, through interlocking organization and concurrent assignment, guide the N.L.F., the liberation army and all other elements of the infrastructure including the most important, the People's Revolutionary party (P.R.P.) which was created in 1962 to represent the Communists officially in the front. COSVN can be portrayed as the central circle surrounded by the Communist P.R.P., which is itself surrounded by the N.L.F. and the liberation army. Directives radiate out from the center through cadres spotted strategically in every key post in the interzones, the zones, the provinces, districts, villages and hamlets. The three-member cell in the hamlet forms the broad base of the party, the smallest cog in an infrastructure that numbers probably 100,000 men and women countrywide. Where Nguyen Tuu Tho and the N.L.F. presidium fit into this formidably interlocking organization is not clear, but it is probable that in the jungle headquarters Tho is a minor figure alongside the veteran revolutionaries who run the Vietcong.

The N.L.F. presidium has been a convenient edifice around which to build the various associations of women, farmers, youths, students, workers and others. The Communist cadres manipulate these organizations through the key committee posts, and use the large membership to keep the insur-

gency on course. The rural Vietnamese membership is generally unaware that Communists control the administrative apparatus but, in reality, would probably care little even if it did know.

The problems of survival in the currently tempestuous climate of Vietnam are of more import than ideology. The peasantry is as much the flesh and blood of the Vietcong as it is of the government, and seems no more willing to be press-ganged into the war machine by the Saigon authorities than it is by the Vietcong. Other than the vitally interested groups on both sides, a peace-at-any-price atmosphere prevails throughout the countryside and partially in the cities. To sustain the war fever, the Vietcong will not hesitate to use bloody terrorism. But the overall technique of the Communists has been less intimidation than participation, involving a whole community in an anti-government act such as digging up a main highway, thereby committing it to the cause. And there are the ever-present cadres who are constantly proselytizing the peasantry. A prominent defector recently told an American propaganda analyst that "they tell lies better than you tell the truth." The American replied, "I'm afraid that as one of the guys who are trying to tell the truth, I think you are right."

REVOLUTIONARY ADMINISTRATION

In Vietnam the truth can be pretty much what you want to make it. The Vietcong has started telling the one-third of the population that it controls or considerably influences that the victory promised them last year (when the massive buildup began for the *Tet* offensive) has already arrived. The reward is the return of real authority to the population after 20 years of struggle, they are told. This authority is in the form of ostensibly elected village liberation committees modelled on the People's Councils that seized power from the French in North Vietnam. Actually, this "revolutionary administration," already partially operative in 17 South Vietnamese provinces, is a Vietcong attempt to legitimize its control over the parts

of the country it has dominated for years. This functioning administration would be an important power base in any legitimate political struggle in Vietnam's future.

The elective process is dishonest, in token contests the preferred candidates' names being printed in bold typeface on ballots, or placed obviously at the head of the lists. Village liberation committees had probably been formed in 1,300 hamlets and villages (containing about ten per cent of the population) by the end of the year, with evidence pointing to higher committees in 36 districts and five cities. The cadres issued identity cards to voters, took a census and encouraged people to return from outside areas to vote, in almost every respect paralleling the efforts of Saigon government officials attempting to establish tighter controls in their areas. Communist cadres were secretly ordered to occupy all key posts in the elective bodies, tying the Communist party directly into the new apparatus that apparently will pose as an entity separate from both the party and the N.L.F.

The new apparatus appears much more important to Communist objectives than the scores of political "alliances" promoted before and after *Tet* and designed to attract intellectuals and prominent professional people—the most important being the Alliance of National, Democratic and Peace Forces formed near Saigon in April, 1968. The Vietcong has been missing deadlines on building the new elective apparatus but the project seems to be moving inexorably forward, possibly towards its proclamation as a functioning government in the countryside that parallels the Saigon administration in the cities and one therefore that must be recognized. Their continuous political gymnastics indicate that the Communists retain an imaginative and increasingly clever approach to the complex Vietnamese situation.

Frustrated in its effort to achieve its goal of total military and political victory in the South because of the massive United States troop intervention, the Vietcong is actively seeking other paths to power. The most obvious route would seem to be through coalition government, and cadres have al-

ready been instructed how to handle this eventuality, "in a plan made ten years ago," according to defector Colonel Chuyen. Stated simply, the tactics would be to seek very few positions at the Saigon level of government, a minimal number at province level, more at district level and many at the village level.

The Communist infrastructure would be expected to do everything possible to establish complete control at the hamlet level, a recognition of the Communist belief that "power resides in the people." A complete governmental takeover from this position is seen by the Communists as not only possible but inevitable, the timing is the only aspect in question, and this would possibly depend on international political factors.

Under certain circumstances the Vietcong might also be prepared to settle for something less than coalition, even simple legitimacy as a political force, provided that freedom to function came with it. Even though it is a minority in Vietnam, its demonstrated organizational brilliance might persuade Vietcong leadership it could gamble on gaining power legitimately. Guarantees made at Geneva for general elections were nullified by President Diem in the late 1950's, however, and the Vietcong would probably be highly suspicious of any future promises. The likelihood is that the Vietcong will continue to use violence or the threat of violence to gain its objectives, ever conscious of the Mao Tse-tung dictum that power grows out of the barrel of a gun. This violence could take the form of the protracted warfare of the past, terrorism, or even a renewal of major fighting with the United States if the Paris negotiations collapse. The Communists are cynically prepared for anything. Documents captured last year quote a speech made to cadres in the

(Continued on page 116)

Peter Arnett began his newspaper career in his native New Zealand, then worked on papers in Sydney, Australia; Bangkok, Thailand; and Vientiane, Laos. He became Saigon correspondent for the Associated Press in 1963.

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Rebellion or Subversion in Cambodia?

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THE PHENOMENON of peasant unrest and rebel activity has not been associated with independent Cambodia. In 1967 and 1968, however, the Cambodian government drew attention to armed challenges to authority in the rural areas which it claimed were "radio controlled" from outside its borders. A chronology of relevant events subjected to critical analysis should make assessment of this claim more realistic.

The prevailing political system in Cambodia has not altered in essential characteristics since the latter part of 1955 when it achieved distinctive form. In 1955, a king, Norodom Sihanouk, who had been enthroned under French colonial auspices, utilized the semi-divine aura of his royal person and the credit he had achieved in negotiating independence to create a new political order. In place of a factious parliamentarianism, he substituted a neo-monarchical system based on loyalty to his person, traditional institutions and the concept of a Khmer (Cambodian) nation. He achieved this end by abdicating a throne which was circumscribed by the constitution and by entering the arena of popular politics. As a personal following he established the *Sangkum Reastr Niyum* (Popular Socialist Community) which is a mass organization rather than a conventional political party. In the general elections of September, 1955, to which Cambodia was committed under the Geneva Agreements of July, 1954,

this organization trounced the political parties of the pre-independence parliamentary era to obtain every seat in the National Assembly. This performance at the polls has been repeated at the three subsequent general elections.

Cambodia is governed formally by adherents of *Sangkum*, which enjoys a virtual monopoly in political control together with a monopsony position in relation to those seeking rewards. Membership in *Sangkum* provides the sole path to political—and much economic—preferment for the Khmer elite and this dominance in the allocation of rewards is in turn an indication of Sihanouk's political standing. He rests at the apex of the political system and represents himself as the personal embodiment of his country's hopes and fears, which he articulates constantly through the media. While his personal predominance and omnipresence may appear somewhat suffocating to some of the urban elite, his popularity among the rural people is believed to be generally high. Indeed, their support has been a vital resource which Prince Sihanouk has exploited to show that his special relationship with the common people is the fundamental prop of the political system. He has taken great care not to alienate the sensibilities of the Buddhist orders whose monks have an even closer connection with the common people.

In allocating rewards and political office,

Prince Sihanouk seemed to seek a measure of correspondence between the apparent degree of imbalance in foreign relationships and the domestic political balance. Certainly he has sought to accommodate the interests of a grouping once known colloquially as the Khmer Rose, more clearly defined as progressive or leftist intellectuals. Drawn in the main from the ranks of French-educated university and school teachers with a student following, they have been critical, in varying degrees, of Cambodian political and economic organization for a number of years;¹ their student support has been described as "unblushingly pro-Chinese."²

The more violently anti-United States aspects of Cambodian foreign policy in the years 1963-1965 and more state control over the economy, together with the provision of cabinet office for luminaries of the left, served to contain a youthful restlessness—a restlessness based on frustration with the existing political structure and decreasing status-job opportunities in relation to the large-scale expansion of educational facilities.³ However, the turbulent aftermath of the general elections of September, 1966, appeared to signify a change in mood of the leftist intellectuals.

AN ELECTORAL INNOVATION

The standard practice before elections in Cambodia had been for Prince Sihanouk to supervise personally the nomination of *Sangkum* candidates for the various constituencies. Only one candidate in any constituency would receive the endorsement of Sihanouk. In 1966, however, Sihanouk withdrew his patronage to permit 415 *Sangkum* members to compete among themselves in 82 constituencies for election. He was probably motivated in this instance by a desire to see a fresher Assembly, freer of the influence of radicals who dared to voice their criticism of his person and policies. In the event, the elections

produced a much more conservatively oriented lower chamber.

The conservative Assembly gave rise in turn to a conservative Cabinet presided over by the Army Commander-in-Chief, General Lon Nol, who was ill-disposed towards the radical left. Sihanouk tried to appease the anger of the left at this juncture by the introduction of an official opposition or counter-government, which was intended to serve as an institutional check on the right-wing cabinet. On this occasion, Prince Sihanouk proved unsuccessful in instituting a new political equilibrium. Lon Nol, sponsored initially by Sihanouk and elected by the Assembly, felt sufficiently confident to reject the radical cast of the counter-government by threatening resignation. This body then assumed a more moderate composition, while the government indicated that it would arrest the state-controlled drift of the economy which had been initiated following the rejection of all United States economic assistance at the end of 1963.

Deprived of a role within the formal political structure, the radical left turned its attention to popular agitation and sought to utilize the urban streets in demonstrations to weaken the Lon Nol government.

UPRISING IN BATTAMBANG

Early in 1967, Prince Sihanouk went for an extended rest cure in the south of France, possibly with the hope that in his absence the government would stabilize the political situation in the capital. But vigorous criticism of the government's economic policies continued, together with allegations that it was seeking rapprochement with the United States.

Prince Sihanouk returned to Phnom Penh on March 9. Two days later, a demonstration was mounted outside the office of the daily bulletin of the counter-government. Demands were made for the resignation of Lon Nol (who had been recently injured in a motoring accident) and his Cabinet and the National Assembly. Strangely but significantly, with such demands as the holding of new elections, there was a call for the withdrawal of units of the army from the Pailin district of the province of Battambang.

¹ See Michael Leifer, "The Cambodian Opposition," *Asian Survey*, April, 1962.

² Don O. Noel, Jr., "Cambodian Politics II" (New York: The Alicia Paterson Fund) January, 1967, p. 3.

³ See Anonymous, "Cambodia: Country without Parties," *Journal of South-Asian History*, March, 1967, pp. 49-50.

The following day, March 12, a special National Congress was held at which Prince Sihanouk presided, attended in large numbers by *Sangkum* loyalists and urban dwellers. This gathering, which formally condemned the opposition demonstration and declared its support for the existing government and Assembly, seemed to establish the credentials of the government and its relationship to Sihanouk. On April 3, however, in a broadcast over radio Phnom Penh, the Cambodian leader announced that a farm camp of the Royal Khmer Socialist Youth⁴ (the junior section of *Sangkum*) in the Pailin district of Battambang had been attacked by armed intruders and that bridges had been destroyed in the Samlaut district of the same province.

In past years, Sihanouk had spoken frequently in public about problems of security in the western provinces, and Battambang in particular. But he had always attributed nefarious activity to the dissident Khmer Serai movement, which originated in opposition to French colonial rule and was led by former Premier Son Ngoc Thanh backed by the pro-Western and anti-Cambodian regimes in Bangkok and Saigon. On this occasion he introduced a new word into the political vocabulary in Cambodia; the Khmers Viet Minh, attributing the uprising in Battambang to this grouping. He went on to proclaim: "The masters of the Khmers Viet Minh are the Viet Minh and the Vietcong."⁵ Sihanouk revealed further that prisoners subject to interrogation had provided the names of leftists in Phnom Penh who, he claimed, had organized and directed the rebellion.

Prince Sihanouk reacted to the situation in three ways. First, units of the Army were directed to known trouble spots to hunt out the rebels. Second, demonstrations of loy-

⁴ For a description of the farm at Stung Kranhong see Don O. Noel, Jr., "Cambodia: Up by the Bootstraps" (New York: The Alicia Patterson Fund), November, 1966, pp. 11a-12.

⁵ B.B.C. *Summary of World Broadcasts*, F.E./2434/A3/9.

⁶ Roger M. Smith, "Cambodia: Between Scylla and Charybdis," *Asian Survey*, January, 1968, p. 75.

⁷ See the account of Prince Sihanouk's conversations with North Vietnamese Premier Pham Van Dong in Peking (September, 1964) in *Le Sangkum* (Phnom Penh), August, 1965, pp. 38-43.

alty were organized by *Sangkum* in the capital and the provinces. Finally, in early May, Sihanouk announced the resignation of the Lon Nol Cabinet and the formation of "an exceptional government" to be headed by himself. In forming a new government Sihanouk probably sought to soften the degree of alienation of the radical left which had followed the announcement of the Lon Nol cabinet. He was certainly uneasy about possible repercussions of the unexplained disappearance in April, 1967, of two well known radical deputies and former ministers, Hou Youn and Khieu Samphan, who were rumored to have been dispatched under concrete and quicklime. It is perhaps significant that one demonstration against the Lon Nol government late in 1966, which culminated in an attack on a police station, had originated in a private school run by Hou Youn.

Although the new government included conservative confidants of the Prince like Penn Nouth and Son Sann, known leftists, Chau Seng and So Nem, were included to maintain the political balance. On June 20, Sihanouk announced the end of dissidence in Battambang and the rallying of the rebels to the legal authorities.

DIPLOMATIC INITIATIVE

It has been suggested that

It was perhaps as much to appease the Prince as to blunt the mounting campaign of repression against their radical sympathizers that in June both Vietnam and the N.L.F. (National Liberation Front) reversed their earlier unwillingness to meet Cambodia's demands and declared their respect for and recognition of her borders.⁶

It should be pointed out, however, that a key difficulty in Cambodian negotiations with the Vietnamese Communists had been the nature of the concession demanded in return for frontier recognition—reciprocal formal recognition of the National Liberation Front.⁷ In September, 1966, the eighth in a series of separate negotiations between Cambodian and N.L.F. representatives had been adjourned in deadlock, apparently on this issue. Prince Sihanouk weighed the prospect of re-

prisals by the Saigon government to recognition of the N.L.F. against his evaluation of the proximity of N.L.F. victory. It might be suggested that in April and May, 1967, the internal situation within Cambodia dictated the course of action and it seems highly likely that it was Prince Sihanouk who took an initiative towards the N.L.F. to provide both for his country's external security and the approval of the radical left.⁸

On June 8, the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam described by Sihanouk as the "sole authentic representative of the South Vietnamese people" recognized Cambodia's present frontiers and undertook to respect the existing line of demarcation. Four days later, the North Vietnamese government followed suit. The same month, it was announced that a permanent diplomatic representation of the N.L.F. would be set up in Phnom Penh and that full diplomatic relations would be established with Hanoi.

While Prince Sihanouk appeared to have dealt with the Khmers Viet Minh, he almost immediately faced a challenge from those described as "Red guards without uniform."⁹ In May, he complained of subversive activity practiced by "Sino-Khmer Communist elements" in the Khmer-Chinese Friendship Association as well as in several schools. There were most certainly enthusiasts for the Chinese cultural revolution among the students of the law and economics faculties of the university in Phnom Penh and there were close links between the radical General Association of Khmer Students and the Chinese Friendship Association which had become very liberal in its dissemination of Maoist literature. Chinese schools in Phnom Penh had become intoxicated by the heady political wine emanating from Peking.

On September 1, Prince Sihanouk announced the abolition of all hyphenated

friendship associations—including the Khmer-Chinese Friendship Association, which was described as "a veritable instrument of subversion." The dissolved associations were to be replaced with new national friendship associations. At the same time Sihanouk announced the dissolution of the General Association of Khmer students believed to be financed from the Chinese Embassy.

On September 9, the extreme left-wing *Nouvelle Dépêche*, edited by the Minister of National Economy, Chau Seng, published the text of a telegram sent to the dissolved Khmer-Chinese Friendship Association from its Peking counterpart which accused the Sangkum regime of reaction. This intervention brought on the first crisis in Sino-Khmer relations and a diplomatic rupture threatened by Sihanouk was averted only by a conciliatory gesture by Premier Chou En-lai, who probably saw little advantage in alienating one of the few countries which continued to serve China well. The external aspect of this crisis was settled by the beginning of November with the arrival of a telegram from Peking recognizing the refurbished Khmer-Chinese Friendship Association. The Chinese Embassy in Phnom Penh became more circumspect in its activities. And by January, 1968, Cambodia received additional military aid from China.

Internally, the repercussions of the affair served to increase political tension and to reactivate leftist opposition. Chau Seng was dismissed from the cabinet, with his associate editor, So Nem, the Minister of Health and president of the dissolved Chinese Friendship Association. Phouk Chhay, founder president of the General Association of Khmer students as well as director-general of the state import firm, was arrested and another radical deputy, Hu Nim, disappeared from the capital. Meanwhile reports were published that a number of teachers were missing from their homes.

THE MATTER OF HOT PURSUIT

The radical left charged that the Cambodian government was actively seeking a rapprochement with the United States.

⁸ A short term reevaluation of the ability of China to interpose its power between Cambodia and the Vietnamese in the light of the convulsions of the cultural revolution is an additional factor to be considered. See Michael Leifer, "Cambodia Turns from China," *New Society* (London), August 17, 1967.

⁹ *Réalités Cambodgiennes* (Phnom Penh), September 22, 1967.

Prince Sihanouk adamantly denied this but was open in his willingness to reestablish diplomatic relations broken in 1965 if the United States would recognize the frontiers of Cambodia and would cease all acts of aggression against Khmer land and people, acts which were a byproduct of the war in Vietnam. The prospect of such a rapprochement was mooted in November, 1967, when Cambodia prepared to receive the former Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy who was paying a visit, so she said, to fulfill a long-standing desire to see the temples at Angkor.¹⁰ Speculation was increased by the inclusion in Mrs. Kennedy's party of Michael Forrestal, a former White House Far East liaison officer who was known to maintain close links with Ambassador Averell Harriman.

From the early 1960's, charges had been levelled from Saigon and later from Washington that Cambodian territory was being used as an active sanctuary for Vietcong insurgents. Prince Sihanouk had denied the charges consistently and the denials had always been substantiated as a result of inquiries by the International Control Commission for Cambodia, by Western journalists and even by Western military attachés stationed in Phnom Penh. In November, 1967, three American journalists who had come ostensibly to cover the Kennedy visit were given official permission to investigate the frontier zone with South Vietnam. As a result of their inquiries they claimed to have discovered a freshly evacuated Vietcong or North Vietnamese regular army campsite at

¹⁰ Reports of speculation well in advance of the Kennedy visit are to be found in Don O. Noel, Jr., "Cambodia: Foreign Policy Prospects" (New York: The Alicia Patterson Fund), March, 1967, pp. 1 and 16-17.

¹¹ The Cambodian Army of approximately 35,000 is equipped neither in numbers nor weapons effectively to police the border with South Vietnam, and Sihanouk's attitude to the problem was well expressed at a press conference early in November, 1967. He told correspondents: "So far as Sihanouk is concerned, he wants to ensure his Cambodia's survival, whatever follies the Americans may commit. He has chosen, therefore, to be on the best of terms with the National Liberation Front and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, which are the two representatives of the Vietnamese people and the nucleus of the future regime." See *Kambuja* (Phnom Penh), January 1, 1968, p. 18.

Mimot, four miles inside the border in Kompong Cham province. It was suggested that this site had served as a staging area for the insurgents for the battle of Loc Ninh fought in South Vietnam's war zone C earlier.

This evidence, which was officially if clumsily disputed by the Cambodian government, lent substance to United States claims that there were at least 20 permanent insurgent campsites along the Cambodian side of the border. Almost immediately Washington announced that United States forces in South Vietnam might be obliged to engage in acts of hot pursuit across the Cambodian border if her territory continued to be used as an active sanctuary. Prince Sihanouk's initial reaction of anger soon gave way to sad realism. He admitted that small units of Vietcong had entered Cambodian territory on a number of occasions, although he denied the existence of hard bases. He expressed a willingness to tolerate hot pursuit by United States troops where Vietcong or North Vietnamese had illegally entered uninhabited outlying regions. Finally, he declared himself prepared to receive an envoy from President Lyndon B. Johnson to discuss the matter of active sanctuary. Sihanouk's true feelings were best expressed in his description of his country as a land caught between the hammer and the anvil.

The Prince's semblance of goodwill and evident helplessness in the face of Vietcong penetration¹¹ led to statements from Washington that hot pursuit was no longer being contemplated. And on January 8, 1968, the United States Ambassador in New Delhi, Chester Bowles, arrived in Phnom Penh to begin discussions with the Cambodian government.

The visit appeared to pass without undue discord. Bowles gave his government's pledge to respect (though not recognize) the frontiers of Cambodia and promised that the United States had no desire to violate Cambodian territory. Recognition in Washington of Cambodia's limited military resources and of the disadvantage of extending the war into Cambodia produced an innocuous agreement which appeared to demonstrate that

there was little either party could do radically to alter the frontier situation.

In view of what had gone before it would seem more than just coincidence that early in January, 1968, Prince Sihanouk revealed "a new Khmers Viet Minh rebellion" in Battambang province. He claimed that the rebellion had been reactivated as part of a global subversive strategy. The rebellion was said not to be confined just to Battambang but to neighboring provinces, and the Prince said that the northeastern provinces had become affected.

As the months passed, it became evident that the extent of rebel activity had become so widespread as to affect almost every province in the kingdom. Regular reports appeared in the press describing guerrilla-style activity with evidence that attacks within separate provinces had, on occasion, been remarkably well synchronized. Although the scale of such activity tended to vary, reports of government security operations suggested that in some provinces the rebel groups were of significant proportions.

The Cambodian government claimed that rebel activity was the work of an insignificant minority and that the "Red rebels are going from setback to setback."¹² This latter claim certainly corresponded to the decreasing number of incidents reported in the Cambodian press, though it could have been a prematurely optimistic assessment.

REBELLION OR SUBVERSION?

The question is whether the process of insurgency which Cambodia has recently experienced is a product of internal circumstances or whether it can be justly attributed to outside intervention. The position of the Cambodian government is categorical. It insists that the uprisings are the direct result of a political decision taken outside Cambodia. "The Khmers Viet Minh are not North Vietnamese but Cambodians converted

¹² *Kambuja*, September 15, 1968, p. 7.

¹³ *Réalités Cambodgiennes*, August 4, 1967.

¹⁴ "Pekin et Hanoi n'ont pas voulu se compromettre directement, mais leur empreinte dans cette affaire est, hélas, trop visible," *ibid.*, February 2, 1968.

by the Viet Minh before 1954 when they occupied certain zones of Khmer territory."¹³ In other words, the insurgents are Khmer (or part Khmer), but their overall direction is external.¹⁴

There is much to indicate that Cambodia did not experience a peasant uprising *per se* but something else. There would seem to be a connection between radical intellectual leftist opposition in the capital and dissidence in the rural areas. Teachers reportedly left their homes for the *maquis* and certain radical deputies and a significant number of their youthful followers came from a peasant background. There is also evidence of a sophisticated level of urban political organization. Prince Sihanouk has always claimed that organizations directing subversion are the Thailand Patriotic Front and the Pathet Lao, acting as proxies for Peking and Hanoi. As yet there is little by way of hard evidence to substantiate this claim. Sihanouk has said that in the Pailin region of Battambang literature printed in Thai but published in Peking was discovered together with military uniforms. He has revealed also that in Preah Vihear province, Vietnamese agents from Laos have been apprehended. Meanwhile in March, 1968, authorities announced the capture of a junk off the south coast with three Vietnamese on board carrying a large quantity of arms and ammunitions for rebels in Kampot province. However, nothing more by way of such evidence has been produced.

While one would not subscribe to the theory of a general peasant uprising within Cambodia one should not neglect the possibility that there may be circumstances favorable to unrest in some part of the rural areas which are capable of exploitation by organized opposition forces. That said, it is im-

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"As in Vietnam, it is by the bullet, not the ballot, that the Communists plan to take over Southeast Asia. As many Communist defectors have claimed, if the Communists can topple Thailand, they will have achieved the goal of Peking, Hanoi and the Asian Communists in general."

Thailand's Role in Southeast Asia

BY KENNETH YOUNG
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TO ASK IF THAILAND is "another Vietnam" or to assert that there should be "no more Vietnams" in Thailand is to miss the point about Thailand's development and importance. Thailand is so different from Vietnam that the comparison is irrelevant and misleading, although it is often made in our media. Thailand is viable, unified, dynamic, and progressing rapidly in her own way. As Vietnam is the hinge of Southeast Asia (to use my expression),¹ Thailand is the swing state, the keystone for Asian regional cooperation.

A strong and viable Thailand is indispensable for the growth of organized Southeast Asian responsibility and the reduction of preponderant United States commitments. Thailand's success in domestic progress and regional diplomacy is one of the most significant factors in Asia's prospects for the 1970's.

In general terms of Asian-United States interaction, Thailand is playing a key role in helping to bring about Asian solidarity, which, in turn, will permit the United States to reduce or remove its "overpresence" from Asia in the next decade. That should be a mutual long-range interest. The matching of the maturation of Asian power with the curtailment of the American presence will be, however, a subtle, complicated, time-consuming process, requiring the diplomatic finesse of Asians and Americans collaborating in a part-

nership of joint planning. This is the kind of diplomatic skill that Thai leaders have long exhibited. It will be at a premium in devising an up-to-date interrelationship so that overall strength rather than net weakness results.

From this standpoint, an Asian "equilibrium" or "balance of forces" consists of three interlocking, interdependent "rings": Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia, and South Asia. The two outer rings mesh in the middle ring of Southeast Asia. There, in turn, Thailand is the geographical hub and political centerpiece. Ignore or shatter it and the whole middle area of Southeast Asia and the vast Asian continent of one-half to two-thirds of the world's population will not be able to come together in any form of Asian equilibrium or solidarity. Fortunately, Thailand's foreign policy is geared toward shaping that solidarity so that there can be a realignment of relationships, with the Asian states as a group more self-reliant and less dependent on the superpower of the United States even as a friendly supporter.

Specifically, the interests of the United States in Thailand can be defined in terms of national security, economic advantages, political cooperation, and general compatibility. The executive and legislative branches of the United States government have long considered that Thailand ranks high in at least three of these categories. The United States has a great strategic interest in Thailand's role in

¹ *Current History*, January, 1968, page 22.

the development of Southeast Asia's political, economic and defensive capabilities. The Thais' ability to manage their economic affairs and to maintain a stable economy with a high growth rate surely ranks high among our national interests in Southeast Asia. If the Thai economy should deteriorate or collapse owing to bad management, a poor-rich gap, or international trading difficulties, the economic centerpiece of a regionalizing Southeast Asia would disappear, and the middle ring of Southeast Asia could not emerge.

Yet it is dangerous and misleading to measure national interest mainly in quantitative terms; it is not something that can be programmed for a computer. The national interest abroad contains vital intangibles of political cooperation and general compatibility. Thailand remains extremely important for United States interests in Asia and the world at large, because of her helpful position in the United Nations and her statesmanlike activity in crystallizing Asian cooperation. More than 130 years of productive exchanges of all kinds demonstrate the reality of Thai-American friendship. Despite that sound basis, current political developments in Thailand and the United States may modify the scope of that relationship in the decade ahead.

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

In 1968, Thailand started a new chapter of politics. Whether it will be "new politics" or just more of the old is not immediately evident. But it will probably enhance Thailand's role and reputation in Asia. Since June, 1968, six significant political events have taken place: the promulgation of a new constitution; the appointment of an upper House; the victory of the so-called opposition Democratic party in the significant Bangkok municipal elections of September 1; the Political Parties Act of October 15; the formation or revival of several parties; and the electoral law of mid-November. The elections to the lower House are slated for February 10, 1969.

More important than these legislative and constitutional acts have been the resumption of political dialogue and the emergence of po-

litical issues for the first time in 10 years. It is often forgotten that Thailand had over 30 years of less than satisfactory experience with Western-style representative government and parliamentary forms after she ended her ancient absolute monarchy in 1932. Some 11 constitutions, 15 governments, numerous coups, and a wide assortment of political parties characterized Thailand's political experience until October 20, 1958. For the last 10 years, political parties, elections and representative government were forbidden. Thailand was governed by martial law under an "administrative," not elective, constitution, while an appointed constituent assembly slowly deliberated on what would fit Thailand.

Finally, a conservative constitution was promulgated on June 20, 1968, by His Majesty, King Bhumiphol Adulyadej, with all the symbolic heraldry of traditional temple gongs and conch shells under a modern flyover of skilled Thai Air Force pilots. With the King as head of state, upholder of the Buddhist religion, and supreme commander of the Thai armed forces, the constitution provides for a "democratic form of government" and a constitutional monarchy in a very Thai way. There are provisions for the role and mission of the King and the rights, liberties and duties of the Thai people. The "directive principles" of state policy include a guarantee of Thailand's independence, reciprocity in international relations, the responsibility of the armed forces to safeguard independence or to "suppress riots," the promotion of education and research, the preservation of the national culture, the support of private economic initiative, the encouragement of agricultural pursuits, the expansion of social welfare for the "happiness of the people" and the promotion of local government.

The legislative and political provisions of the constitution, however, are the most significant ones for Thailand, Southeast Asia, and the United States. The constitution provides for an appointed, not an elected, Senate. The House of Representatives, however, is to be elected, with members serving for four years. The first such elections are to be held

within 240 days of the new constitution coming into effect, that is, by February 15, 1969, at the latest. The executive powers are to be exercised by a Prime Minister and a Cabinet both appointed by the King. Unlike the European parliamentary system, Ministers cannot vote in the National Assembly. The constitution also provides for the judicial power under independent courts, a constitutional tribunal, and the amending process of the constitution.

Since June 20, political activity has been gaining momentum. In early July, 1968, on recommendations from the government, the King appointed part of the new Senate, of which some 90 of the 120 persons are officers of the armed forces and the police. Subsequently, the Senate drafted a law on political parties and a law regulating the elections for the National Assembly. In the meantime, the Democratic party—which has been famous in Thai politics since the 1930's for its effective and colorful opposition—upset predictions (and some official expectations) by winning 22 out of 24 seats in the Bangkok municipal elections. Whether or not this was a sign of the future, it intensified interest in political activity, at least in Bangkok.

The two laws drafted by the Senate give effect to what might be called Thailand's "prudential democracy." Thai leaders are taking no chances, for contemporary Thai as well as Asian history supports their caution in seeking to avoid the chaos of too many parties or the dilemma of foreign influences. The Political Parties Act limits the number of political parties and keeps them completely out of the "pockets" or "purses" of the aliens—Chinese, foreign Communists, or Westerners. Thailand, like other Asian countries which tried out the Western party system before and after World War II, found that the West's political suit did not fit Thailand's political body. The 1968 constitution and the Political Parties Act are new models. It is significant, for example, that several sections of this act prohibit political parties from acting against the "democratic administration," peace and order, the "good morality of the

people" or the national economy and security. The act sets up a political party registrar, the Undersecretary of the Interior, with power to regulate the authorization and supervision of political parties within the intent of the law. Parties must reapply to him for registration every year. Moreover, he can stop the activities of a party's executive committee and eliminate it if the party executives are found responsible for harmful activities.

Since mid-October, political leaders and political parties have been forming. The Prime Minister personally registered a "new" *Sahapracha* Thai party—the United Thai Peoples party—at ten minutes of ten on the night of October 25, because that was the "auspicious time" selected by the priests and astrologers for this "history-making event." The 15 founders of the party, including the Prime Minister, consisted of the 12 top military officers of the kingdom and three civilians, including Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman, and Minister of National Development Pote Sarasin, both of whom were Thai ambassadors to the United States and who are leaders in promoting Thailand's role in Asian co-operation.

Continuing the direction of the past decade, this government party's foreign platform stresses regional cooperation, friendly relations with all nations having no "evil designs" on Thailand, peaceful settlement of disputes, and Thai sovereignty. Its domestic platform calls for national unity, political security, free enterprise, and planned development of a diversified economy.

In contrast, the Democratic party puts more stress on democratic than on traditional goals, seeking to amend the constitution to make the form of government more representative and to serve the people better. The Democratic party's foreign policy would make Thailand as "self-dependent as possible" in case "a powerful nation aiding Thailand changes its policy toward Thailand," perhaps suggesting a looser relationship with the United States.²

Several other parties have been in the process of formation or revival. The *Prachachon* (People's party) is resuming activity as a

² *Siam Nikorn*, October 1, 1968.

"popular party" which, before 1958, participated in some coalition governments as well as in opposition. The *Sethaorn* (Economist party), which was a prominent socialist group, is reviving its efforts to formulate a democratic socialist program and to appeal to intellectuals and workers at least in the urban areas. The *Naew Prachatipatai* party (Democratic Front) is appealing to the younger generation. The *Rasadorn* (Populist party), which sounds somewhat like some of the others, is supposed to have a more farm-oriented, rural appeal.

Thailand's new chapter of politics has opened political dialogue for the first time in many years. Just two days after the King promulgated the constitution, several thousand students demonstrated. Some were protesting against the government's decision to retain martial law under the new constitution; others were shouting anti-government slogans, complaining about rising prices, police brutality, the sending of Thai troops to Vietnam, and the use of Bangkok as a "rest and recreation spot" for United States soldiers from Vietnam.

Another sign of new political openings within Thailand's "prudential democracy" has been public discussion of ending the ban on labor unions and the possibility of reestablishing free collective bargaining.³ The president of the former Thailand Trade Union Congress, who was in jail for several years since 1958, has pointed out that the number of Thai workers has substantially increased during the past decades as a result of the government's promotion of industry, foreign investment and manufacturing. Service trades have also increased in the urban areas of Thailand. Consequently, concern has been expressed in the Thai press that some kind of labor organization is needed to protect and enhance the working conditions for the growing ranks of Thai urban labor. This could be significant in terms of helping the growth of a non-Communist regional labor movement in Southeast Asia.

During 1968, discussion and questioning of

Thailand's foreign policy also opened up somewhat. This subject, until recently, was carefully ignored in the Thai press, although constantly talked about and even criticized privately among Thais in Bangkok. On September 9, *Siam Rath*, Thailand's distinguished newspaper, published a long anonymous commentary which may have been written by the newspaper's editor, Kukrit Pramoj. Criticizing the foreign policies of Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman and the Thai government, the commentary suggested a position between "waging an anti-American campaign" or "following all the way with America." Instead, it urged using

our heads to think where our national interest and our hope of survival lie, to what extent we can rely on our allies, how much we have to stand on our own two feet, and how free we are to dictate our foreign policy.

Observing that the United States is going to "relax its commitments in Southeast Asia," the commentary questioned whether a foreign policy centered on regional cooperation among Southeast Asian countries would enable them to survive. According to *Siam Rath*, Thailand's survival depended not on being an ally of any country, but on the "security of our country's internal politics"; it urged the speeding up of military and internal administrative policies to restore peace and order inside Thailand.

NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNISM

This new political chapter opened up new opportunities for the Communists in Thailand. Their small party has long been outlawed. For several decades it has operated underground with difficulty. The Communists have made it clear now, however, that they will not "go political" and join the new political process. In fact, they vehemently reject the electoral parliamentary way and will proceed with their "armed people's war," using violent means to attain power. Instead of waiting to see how political opportunities might evolve under the constitution and the Political Parties Act, the Communists immediately denounced the "fake" constitution, the "Thanom-Praphat clique," the "neo-

³ *Siam Rath*, September 17, 1968; *Bangkok Post*, October 2, 1968.

colonialism of the U.S. imperialists," and struggle through peaceful or parliamentary means. The Thai Communist party will continue to push the Maoist line of gun power rather than law power, and will not join the other parties in seeking votes or political power via legal means.

According to the clandestine Communist "voice of the Thai people," the question of whether to "fight with arms or fight in the National Assembly" can be answered only by a decision to wage "armed struggle" resolutely because, in the Maoist lexicon, struggle through peaceful means or by the electoral process cannot "liberate" Thailand. Instead, the Thai Communists are applying a strategy of "sanctions" against the "fake" general elections. They will try to persuade or intimidate the people not to vote or participate in elections in any way. The National Liberation Front has tried the same strategy in Vietnam.

The Communist party of Thailand has also appealed to political groups or leaders to join its armed struggle and attack violently on all fronts in every region of Thailand until final victory is attained. As in Vietnam, it is by the bullet, not the ballot, that the Communists plan to take over Southeast Asia. As many Communist defectors have claimed, if the Communists can topple Thailand they will have achieved the goal of Peking, Hanoi and the Asian Communists in general. They will "regionalize" Southeast Asia in another "socialist commonwealth."

THAILAND AND COMMUNIST INSURGENCY

The Communist effort to capture Thailand by violence rather than by elections seemed to lose momentum in 1968. Most Communist insurgency has taken place since 1964 in fairly isolated, poor village areas of northeast Thailand near the Mekong River. Other pockets of armed action have also developed in northern Thailand, where members of hill tribes have been well trained and armed by the Chinese Communists, and in the long southern peninsula where Chinese Communist guerrillas and Thai Muslim dissidents have been harassing police.

The main effort of the insurgency in northeast Thailand seems to have been a low level, elementary, synthetic form of insurrection or rebellion. Even the poorest Thais in northeast Thailand do not seem to have caught the spark of revolution. The Communists have obviously found it hard to "radicalize" the Thai peasants. Each year since 1962 several hundred young men have gone through Communist guerrilla training near Hanoi or in China. But the total number of Thai guerrillas seems to be something like 3,000 to 4,000, and has not increased over the past three years. In fact, on October 15, 1968, Prime Minister Thanom told a press conference that only some 2,000 "terrorists" were left.

Describing their lack of spark, a Vietcong colonel who had defected told me in Saigon in June, 1968, that the Thai farm boys whom he had tried to train during 1962-1964 were very poor revolutionary prospects. They were so under-motivated and under-educated that they did not become disciplined, dedicated or competent guerrillas. He very much doubted that they had the zeal to carry out what he called the "insurrection of Thailand." He had been instructed to indoctrinate these young Thais with the insurrectionary aims of abolishing Thailand's national institutions—the monarchy, the Buddhist Church and the government—establishing a "people's republic" after "the American imperialists" had been ejected from Thailand, and joining China, Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia in a socialist federation.

Thai defectors have described the same objectives to me. They have also confirmed their unwillingness to remain in a radical movement aimed at assassinating their King and Queen, killing their Buddhist priests, and spreading violence throughout their land. While they had grievances and aspirations, like most young Thais today, they did not relish the Communist program. The colonel, indeed, believed that the Thai Communists had very little prospect of succeeding in Thailand.

The course of the insurgency in 1967-1968 seems to have borne out his predictions. The number of assassinations, ambushes, armed

propaganda meetings and other terrorist acts dropped off markedly compared to the rising scale of violence in 1965-1966. Unless their effectiveness has been hidden, the Communist insurgents have very little to show for their "instant revolution" of the last decade in Thailand.⁴

Three factors explain the lack of Communist headway in Thailand and the government's relative success in bringing the insurgency under reasonably satisfactory control. These are lessons for all Southeast Asia and for the United States, too. First, the Thai farmer and his family—as individuals and as part of the large rural majority of Thailand's population—are not susceptible to the Communist message and to Communist tactics. Thais are individualists and traditionalists. They follow their Buddhist and religious customs. They own their own farms, even if they are in debt. They look for a kind of satisfaction known as *sannuk*. They do not subscribe to the materialistic appeal of Communist doctrine, and reject the negative and destructive tactics of the Communist insurgents such as hatred for their King and Queen and their government or antagonism toward the Buddhist monks and teachers.

While the northeast remains the poorest section of Thailand, the people in the northeast have not shifted their loyalties.⁵ Although the farmers can be intimidated and corralled by use of terror and the gun, and will helplessly submit to a superior power if denied protection, the Thai instinctively prefers to stay out of politics. Thus the Thai rural population does not offer a potential base for a widespread "radicalizing" movement in Thailand. If this is true for Thailand, the therapy can be applied to Vietnam and other parts of Southeast Asia.

Since 1961, the Thai government has vigorously taken the initiative in dealing with Thai farmers in remote areas to prevent or

reduce Communist insurgency. The Thai government's imaginative innovations in political, social, economic and security development will have an important bearing on Thailand's ability to carry out her role in Southeast Asia. The most lasting innovation, in my judgment, has been the sustained Thai effort to improve the quality of administration of local government in villages and provincial districts. Good service, good police, and good development are the ingredients of success in rural Southeast Asia, difficult as it is to train the people.

The Thai leaders have understood—where many other Southeast Asian governments have not—that a political vacuum in the villages would be the most vulnerable opening for Communist tactics of force and intimidation. Accordingly, the Thais have undertaken a number of measures to try to fill that vacuum. While some have backfired or have been heavy-handed, the efforts to improve the capacities of village mayors, district officials and provincial governors are, on balance, paying off in diminishing the village vacuum, establishing communication between the governed and the governors, and improving the lot of the farmers, their wives who are so important in this, and the children who are changing the future expectations of Thai society as a whole. The Thai government has brought a "government presence" into rural areas where there was danger of insurgency or actual armed attacks. In villages which hardly ever saw an outsider except a tax-collector, mobile information teams and mobile development units have introduced many different kinds of technicians to help the villagers in their daily lives and in protecting themselves.

Over the past few years, much of the population of northeast Thailand has come to realize that there is such a thing as a government

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⁴ For similar conclusions see Stanley Karnow's articles in *The Washington Post* of December 7 and 8, 1967; the *Wall Street Journal*, April 29, 1968, page 16; and George Wilson's report in *The Washington Post* of May 26, 1968.

⁵ See *Asia*, a journal published by The Asia Society, Volume 6, Autumn, 1966, pp. 2-27.

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"The stakes in Malaysia are high, both for Malaysians and for two of the major foreign powers. In the end, however, it will be the Malaysians themselves . . . who will determine the winners of the Malaysian political game. . . . Malaysian government may fall far short of the democratic ideal, but it is difficult not to sympathize with the dilemmas faced by its leadership."

The Malaysian Political Game

By ROBERT O. TILMAN
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IN CONTRAST TO the quiet emergence of an independent Malaya,¹ the birth of the larger Federation of Malaysia touched off numerous domestic and international disputes that have continued almost uninterrupted to the present time. On the surface this may not seem unexpected. Malaya had her internal communal problems, and it is not surprising that the enlarged federation, which incorporated the large Chinese population of Singapore, exacerbated some of these underlying social tensions. Malaya and Britain fought a 12-year war against Communist-led guerrillas (1948-1960) and, again, it comes as no surprise that these same Malayan political leaders regarded communism as one of the major threats facing Malaysia and responded appropriately.

A number of the manifold and difficult problems Malaysia faced stemmed from the natural enemies of the present regime—communism, communal chauvinism, and the lingering hostility of states identified with these

forces in Malaya. These problems could be anticipated. What was unexpected, however, was the extent to which some of Malaysia's most pressing internal troubles would spring as unintended consequences from her domestic successes and the extent to which Malaysia would find it difficult to get along with some of her previously friendly neighbors.

At home, the efficiency and effectiveness of the Alliance government produced a growing Gross National Product, raised living standards, and provided impressive social amenities, but in so doing it also began to trim away the social insulation separating the Malay and Chinese communities. From increased contact came increased tension, and race riots occurred for the first time in Penang, Singapore and elsewhere in 1964. Moreover, political demonstrations (novelties in themselves in Malaya) increasingly took on a communal flavor. It became painfully apparent in Malaysia from 1963 onward that "getting to know you" did not necessarily imply "getting to like you," despite the authority of the heroine of *Anna and the King of Siam*. Many of the more recent domestic problems facing Malaysia may, in fact, be traced to this simple observation.

In foreign affairs, Malaysia found herself embroiled frequently in small but nasty disputes that on the surface appeared highly illogical. Malaysia and Indonesia are both predominantly Malay-Muslim in ethnic and

¹ The terms Malay, Malaya, Malaysia, Malayan and Malaysian are confusing. "Malay" refers to the communal group from which the name of the Peninsula is derived. "Malaya" is often used even today to describe the territory of the former Federation of Malaya (1948-1963). "Malaysia" is now applied to the territory of the enlarged Federation of Malaysia (1963—), which incorporated the old Federation of Malaya, Singapore, Sarawak, and Sabah (formerly North Borneo). Singapore withdrew on August 9, 1965, but the remaining states are still known as the Federation of Malaysia. "Malayan" and "Malaysian" are used to indicate nationality rather than community.

religious composition and they share a common language; yet *konfrontasi*² took the two states to the brink of open warfare. The Philippines and Malaysia share many ethnic, linguistic and cultural traits; they are two of the three practicing democracies in Southeast Asia; both are ideologically committed to the West; both elites are English-speaking; and both are strongly committed to free enterprise economics. Yet the Philippine claim to Sabah—badly handled by both parties—has disrupted economic ties, threatened the new Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and produced mutual suspicions that will make future understandings more difficult.

Malaysia and Singapore also share many of the common traits of the Philippines and Malaysia (with the major exception of race). Singapore is the natural port for the Malayan hinterland and the transportation and communication systems of Malaysia are largely Singapore-centered. Yet Malaysia found it impossible to live with Singapore as a member of the Federation, and as independent neighbors their relations, though improved, are still strained.

Why have such problems as these arisen at home and abroad? What are the stakes both for Malaysians and outsiders?

THE STAKES OF THE GAME

Even by present international standards, Malaysia is a small state in total land area, somewhat smaller than California and Japan, somewhat larger than Italy, and about the size of Finland. Her some nine million population is scattered unevenly from the southern border of Thailand down the peninsula of Malaya and across the South China Sea from the northwestern to the northeastern tips of Borneo (excluding the two pockets that con-

stitute the Sultanate of Brunei). Although standards of living vary greatly throughout Malaysia, per capita incomes there rank third in Asia, following Japan and Singapore. Wealth is generally concentrated geographically in the west and south of the peninsula, in urban centers throughout, and in scattered pockets elsewhere. In social terms, the per capita income of the Chinese community is the highest, that of the Bornean natives the lowest, while the urban Malays tend to be well off and the rural Malays poor.³ The diversity of Malaysia is probably her most striking feature. Although located in the same country, the air-conditioned buildings of Kuala Lumpur and the longhouses of Sarawak represent two different worlds.

Malaysia has been blessed by nature with some of the major tin deposits of the world and, thanks to British colonialism, with the world's most productive rubber industry. But in fairness to the Malaysians it must be pointed out that it was not the colonial power alone that succeeded in exploiting these natural resources, for, unlike her Indonesian neighbor, Malaya took up where the British left off in a most rational and businesslike manner. As synthetics threatened natural rubber, Malaya worked hard to improve technology, reduce costs, increase production, and pioneer new uses for natural rubber. Rational economic planners told Malaysia's politicians what they could expect in the years ahead and—to their everlasting credit—the politicians accepted economic logic and did not search for foreign conspirators in times of declining revenues.

When faced with the hard fact that the demand for tin was falling to the point that it might become uneconomic to extract it, and when they recognized that natural rubber was destined to face stiffer competition from synthetics each year, Malaysia's political leaders began planning economic diversification. While one can still speak only in terms of the potential of Malaysia in such fields as manufacturing, shipping and tourism, it is nevertheless possible to point to a number of promising developments. Hopefully, these will provide alternative sources of national wealth

² *Konfrontasi* (confrontation) was the term used by Sukarno to describe the Indonesian opposition to the creation and existence of Malaysia.

³ Malays constitute about 40 per cent of Malaysia's population; the Chinese, slightly less. Unfortunately, the last census in the Peninsula is now more than 10 years old. Also, the government now confuses the estimates by shifting the categories used in the 1957 (Malaya) and 1960 (Sabah and Sarawak) census reports.

as the fortunes of rubber and of tin decline.

Malaysia is well off by many standards of measurement and the upper classes of the country have much to lose should the game be radically changed. Similarly, there are many outside Malaysia who also have a stake in her future.

For the developed world, the economic stakes are high but, ironically, they are probably lower in the case of the most technologically advanced nations. In the United States and West Germany, synthetics have already reached high levels of production; technology has gradually shifted to the utilization of larger proportions of these; and the resulting demand for natural rubber has proportionately fallen. The U.S.S.R., which has lagged in the development of synthetics, is now the single largest purchaser of Malaysian rubber. Malaysia needs the Russian market, and the U.S.S.R. needs Malaysian rubber. This hard economic fact has produced some striking behavioral contradictions,⁴ though it has only softened Malaysia's anti-Communist posture, not erased it.

China presents an entirely different case. The economic stakes of China in Malaysia are small⁵ and the ideological stances of the two countries are poles apart. For these reasons, the Alliance regime fears Chinese adventures in Malaysia and, while the role played by China in the Malayan Emergency of 1948-1960 was probably smaller than the government claims, the present fear is not unfounded. There is little that Malaysia has to offer that China cannot procure at the present time through normal channels of international trade at a lower cost than could be obtained through political adventures. But, given the ideological fervor and political up-

heaval in China today, Malaysian leaders are probably correct in assuming that economic rationality might not be a major factor in contemporary Chinese foreign policy. Having said this, however, it still must be pointed out that there is little evidence on the public record that China has been involved in the political troubles of Malaysia thus far.

The United States has apparently accepted the new Soviet diplomatic presence in Malaysia gracefully, but it shares with Malaysia the fear of possible Chinese adventures in Southeast Asia. To counter this perceived threat the creation of a viable non-Communist regional association has become an important United States goal. There was, therefore, some optimism in Washington over the Asian and Pacific Council (ASPAC) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). ASPAC (which includes members from both East and Southeast Asia) has proved too undiscriminating in its anticommunism to be attractive to Malaysia now that she has good relations with the U.S.S.R. and several East European Communist countries. ASEAN (Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand) was initially greeted with enthusiasm in the participating countries of Southeast Asia and in Washington, and its future looked promising. ASEAN was actually a descendent of ASA (the Association of Southeast Asia—Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand) and resembles ASA in the statement of its goals and procedures. ASA recorded some small accomplishments before relations were disrupted between Malaysia and the Philippines as a result of the Sabah dispute and, similarly, ASEAN, after a loudly trumpeted beginning, is now less active because of the same issue. In brief, despite her image of China, there is very little evidence to date that Malaysia has come to recognize "Southeast Asia" as a regional political concept that may serve as a useful counterweight to the China she fears. It might be added that this general reluctance to enter into meaningful association with her neighbors is by no means limited to Malaysia. It therefore seems highly unlikely, despite optimism in some quarters, that a genuine regional

⁴ In the library of the University of Malaya, books on Marx and Lenin are kept under lock and key with the additional requirement that the names of all users must periodically be forwarded to the government. Nevertheless, according to the official *Malaysian Press Digest*, one of the high points of the Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister's trip to Moscow was a visit to Lenin's study in the Kremlin.

⁵ Malaysia's trade with China represents only a small fraction of her total world trade. It is interesting, however, that the balance is strongly and consistently in favor of China.

political association will emerge for many years.

The stakes in Malaysia are high, both for Malaysians and for two of the major foreign powers. In the end, however, it will be the Malaysians themselves, not the Russians, Chinese, or Americans, who will determine the winners and losers of the Malaysian political game.

THE RULES OF THE GAME

Malaysia's system of government can be described briefly as a hybrid combination of a Westminster Parliament (including a British-style monarch and lower house but with an upper house that resembles the House of Lords and the United States Senate) superimposed on a federal structure and decorated by the trappings of an Islamic Sultanate. Although the system is federal in name, the states are weak and the center is strong. The head of state (*Yang di-Pertuan Agong*, or King), who is selected every five years from among the nine reigning sultans, has high status but little power. The upper chamber (*Dewan Negara*, or Senate) is made up of persons appointed by the King because of unusual service to the state (a practice borrowed from the House of Lords) and of representatives elected by the 13 state legislatures (as was true in the United States before the Seventeenth Amendment). The *Dewan Negara* has few real powers.

It is the lower house (*Dewan Ra'ayat*, or House of Representatives) that is designated by the constitution as the center of Malaysian politics. The House, with several exceptions, can amend the constitution with a simple two-thirds vote and it can pass laws with a simple majority. Representatives are elected by plurality vote from single-member constituencies throughout Malaya (and shortly throughout Malaysia) for periods determined by the government in power, but not to exceed five years. The majority party then selects its prime minister, who in turn appoints a cabinet that is collectively responsible to the lower house. In prescribing the functioning of parliamentary government, the Malayan and Malaysian constitutions largely

codified the unwritten conventions of Britain. But because of the differing nature of the party systems, one has to go beyond the formal constitution to understand the actual dynamics of government.

The ruling party in Malaysia since the independence of Malaya in 1957 has been the Alliance, a federation of three communally-based parties dominated by the United Malays National Organization (U.M.N.O.). Of the other two components, the Malayan Chinese Association (M.C.A.) is far stronger than the Malayan Indian Congress (M.I.C.) but, given the nature of the unspoken political bargain in the Alliance, U.N.M.O. has retained a vastly disproportionate voice in policy-making.

After the creation of Malaysia, the composition of the Alliance became more complicated. Parties bearing the Alliance name were successful in the the indirect elections held in the two Bornean states, and in Parliament the Sabah Alliance party, the Sarawak Alliance party, and Malayan Alliance party united to form the Malaysian Alliance. However, in view of the low state of development in Borneo, the competence of the Malayan Alliance leadership, and the resources available to Kuala Lumpur leaders, the Bornean Alliances—constantly divided by internal bickering of a highly particularistic nature—have had little influence on the policies of the Malaysian Alliance. In brief and admittedly oversimplified terms, the old Malayan Alliance still prescribes the rules of the game in Parliament and the Bornean Alliances acquiesce with little dissent.

The loyal opposition is badly fragmented and covers the spectrum from the Malay-supremacy, avowedly Muslim, Pan-Malayan Islamic party to the left-wing Labor party dominated by Chinese. Thus far there has been little success in creating a united opposition, though in the months before the expulsion of Singapore the idea of a "grand opposition" seemed to be emerging.

A more recent development has been the creation of the *Gerakan Ra'ayat Malaysia* (Malaysian Peoples Movement), a multi-communal opposition party organized by in-

tellectuals from the universities and the professions. The *Gerakan* stands for more direct government intervention in the economy, civil equality based on assistance for the poor of all races, and a nonaligned foreign policy. It seems doubtful that the *Gerakan* will ever attain mass support, and its future is uncertain. It could perhaps become a permanently small party deriving its influence from the competence and cohesion of its leadership. On the other hand, with the departure from Malaysia of the *Gerakan*'s most articulate Malaysian-Chinese leader,⁶ it is possible that the Malay leaders, also articulate and committed, may gradually reorient the party in a more modernist Muslim-Malay direction. In any case, at least at the present time, the *Gerakan* has joined the ranks of the splintered and ineffectual loyal opposition.

Although one may find numerous faults with the Alliance (it is often heavy-handed and insensitive, for example) it cannot be denied that it has provided a socially plural state with an effective and relatively efficient government that permits only a tolerable amount of corruption. In the context of Southeast Asia (or anywhere else in the world for that matter) this is no mean accomplishment.

Perhaps the greatest achievement of the Alliance has been its ability to make political decisions affecting the major communities without inflaming communal emotions. This has been possible because the Alliance government has placed considerable restriction on free speech when such speech concerns relations among the races; at the same time it has carried out its undoubtedly heated political bargaining on sensitive social questions behind the closed doors of the National Executive Committee. Most of the potentially explosive communal issues are resolved by a small number of persons in private. Once a decision is made, it is presented to the Parliament and to the public as the Alliance consensus. At the same time, the emotional level of public debate is controlled and the

⁶ Wang Gungwu, one of the founders of the *Gerakan*, left Malaysia shortly after the creation of the party to fill a history chair at the Australian National University.

well-disciplined Alliance membership is whipped into line behind its leaders. Thus the Alliance can move from debate, to policy, to law, with a minimum of friction. This is not precisely democracy as the West has come to know it but, given the realities of the Malaysian environment, it would not be easy for any political theorist to construct a more democratic system that was still workable.

How long Malaysians themselves will be willing to play the game by these rules, and how long the Alliance will be able to maintain some of the "gentlemen's agreements" essential to the playing of the game, are questions that are not easy to answer. Malays have found that many non-Malays do in fact want the prestige and perquisites of service in the upper echelon of administration (a British and Malay preserve in colonial days), and the Alliance government has encouraged Malays to enter into business (a Chinese and British preserve under colonialism).

Moreover, the Chinese electorate has expanded dramatically since the first general elections in 1955. While the cards are stacked against them because of their concentration in urban areas and the contrasting dispersal of Malay voters throughout the country, and while discrimination against urban voters is constitutionally sanctioned, it is nevertheless apparent that the Chinese have gained considerable electoral strength in the decade of independence.

THE PLAYERS

The political elite of present-day Malaysia is a remarkably homogeneous group drawn largely from a single educational stream. Many of the older political and bureaucratic leaders, in fact, passed through an almost identical socialization process consisting of Malay College at Kuala Kangsar, the Malay Administrative Service (M.A.S.), and the Malayan Civil Service (M.C.S.). Malay College was (and to a large extent still is) an English public school transported into the tropical environment of Perak. The school, in the days of the older elite of Malaysia, came complete with a stern but fair English headmaster, prefects, a high table, playing fields

and all the trappings of an aristocratic British public school. The virtues extolled were the same as those praised at Eton, Harrow and Charter House, and the emerging graduates ("old boys") were about as English in speech, mannerisms and expressed attitudes as were their British equivalents.

Most of the "old boys" of Malay College, and many graduates of secondary schools created later on the Malay College model, found their way into the M.A.S., the junior service that staffed subordinate posts in the old Federated Malay States and served as a feeder for the colonial-dominated M.C.S. The M.A.S. gave its members more than mere administrative experience, for it also prepared them further for entry into the British-dominated world of modern Malaya. Those most socially acceptable to the British colonial authorities (provided they also happened to have a minimum of professional competence) could look forward eventually to admission to the elite M.C.S. For most Malay bureaucrats, the M.C.S. represented the crowning achievement of their lives, even if they retired after some 10 or 15 years of M.C.S. service, with no higher position than that of District Officer. When the British began to transfer power to the Malays, following the Second World War, there was a readily available pool of talent that was English-speaking, accepted in British social circles and generally competent in governmental affairs. The parting with Britain in 1957 was, therefore, smooth, cordial and gentlemanly, and the elite still in office is the same elite that stood in Merdeka Stadium on August 31, 1957, to witness the lowering of the Union Jack for the last time over Malayan soil.

Although most of these elite were drawn from the Malay community, the English stream of education also produced enough Chinese and Indians to permit communications across communal lines, at least at the very top. Malays dominated administration and politics in the last days of British rule, but there were a number of English-educated non-Malays who had undergone a similar socialization experience through somewhat different channels. Individually, these formed com-

munal political parties; together, they created the present Alliance.

If the English stream of education produced a cooperating elite, then the Malay and Chinese streams can be said to have produced many (but not all) of the contending elite. Malay education was introduced by the British to make the Malays better peasants; at least it gave them so little modern secular education that they could not share any other kind of life. While it probably accomplished this goal with the masses, there were, not unexpectedly, many who learned more than the bare minimum, either at religious schools or at the Sultan Idris Training College, which was charged with turning out Malay school teachers and teaching materials. Much of the Malay opposition to the Alliance today can be traced to these two educational sources.

British educational policy toward the Chinese was largely one of laissez faire. The Chinese were willing and able to educate themselves and the British, for reasons of economy, were willing to let them. In the end, this short-range economy proved costly to both Britain and to Malaysia but, at the time, it seemed to most to be a highly practical and workable solution. The Chinese educational stream produced a frustrated and disoriented population who were neither Chinese nor Malayan, and who possessed few of the technical skills needed to achieve social status in the Malayan system. While some succeeded in business, many more retreated to a life where day-to-day existence was their chief concern. It was the latter group who provided the volunteers for the guerrilla war of 1948-1960,

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BOOK REVIEWS

On Southeast Asia

BY RENÉ PERITZ

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BREAKTHROUGH IN BURMA, BY BA MAW (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968. 460 pages, index, appendices, \$8.75.)

HISTORY OF BURMA, BY MAUNG HTIN AUNG (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967. 350 pages, index, appendices, \$12.00.)

Burma's voluntary absence from the Asian diplomatic scene has often been interpreted as a sign of that country's determined attempt to set her internal house in order. A nation of innumerable political and ideological factions, ethnic groups and religious associations, Burma has faced many obstacles in developing a sense of national identity and unity. The little national harmony and domestic peace the country has enjoyed in this century have been the result of the authoritarian and quasi-democratic practices of the various governments in power; and since Burma has been subjected to control by successive British, Japanese and again British regimes, the current Burmese national leaders have decided to reduce their political connections with the outside world. These leaders have often expressed the wish to reduce the many divisions and tensions in their country.

This has been accomplished by closing the doors to foreign influences; the West as well as the East has been asked to let the country develop along her own lines. The search for the origin of this broad policy of national diffidence apparently begins

somewhere back in Burma's precolonial history. With this perspective in mind two new detailed good histories are currently available.

Ba Maw, an outspoken revolutionary, educated in England and France and first Prime Minister and Head of State of independent Burma, gives a personal assessment of the early anticolonial force which collaborated with the Japanese in order to evict the British. He examines the intellectual underpinnings of that movement and the innumerable difficulties he faced in trying to meet his objectives. He discusses the shifting fortunes of many of the pre-independence politicians and programs as well as the troubles and clashes among many of the regional armies which roamed—and continue to do so—throughout Burma during the war period. Ba Maw points out that the Karen rebellion, for example, aimed against the majority Burmans has come into existence as a result of the desire by a strong minority ethnic group to remain outside the national Burmese structure. Other communal groups, notably the Arakanese, Shans and Kachins, have expressed apprehension about their status as distinct communities. They too have organized paramilitary forces and have taken the communal road to insurrection and revolutionary activity against the regime. Ba Maw concludes that Burmese rulers, prior to 1946, had sympathy and understanding for the many national pluralistic tendencies but were incapable of creating a country that was politically stable and at

the same time receptive to the political needs of her many peoples.

A history of Burma by Maung Htin Aung, a rector of the University of Rangoon, deals with the same background as that of Ba Maw but emphasizes other aspects of the problems in greater measure. He has set himself the considerable task of elucidating the coups and countercoups which have been a hallmark of Burmese governance. He examines at length the broad aspects of British colonial policy of establishing protectorates in Burma ruled by native kings and satrapies. In these difficult tasks of analysis the author has succeeded admirably; his book will be an essential source of reference for students of Burmese affairs.

GOVERNMENT AND REVOLUTION IN VIETNAM. By DENNIS J. DUNCANSON. (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1968. 442 pages, supplementary notes, abbreviations, bibliography and index, \$9.50.)

The conclusions of Dennis Duncanson's treatment of modern day politics in Vietnam are interesting and provocative. He notes that "Few foreign observers believe the South Vietnamese can put their house in order by their own unaided efforts; the devastation of war is reason enough for the continuation of foreign aid, and the cost sooner or later of demobilization is another." His treatise is an account of those moments of instability in Vietnam when conspiracies to unseat the government of the day are revealed to the public. Plots within the armed forces of Vietnam, the attachment of the one-time Diem regime to authoritarian practices and the attempts by the many governments in Vietnam to pacify the countryside by military means—without recognizing the difficult root causes of the conflict—have continuously increased the levels of tensions. Much has gone wrong in the military and civil efforts to bring peace to Vietnam. Duncanson discusses some homely truths—including the attitudes of the peasants to their indiffer-

ent rulers, the complex problems of rent control and land reform, United States aid schemes, United States participation in Vietnamese affairs, and the tactical achievements of the Vietcong. The brief made by the author for Vietcong survival against its massed opposition is impressive. Quoting Le Duan, a key North Vietnamese functionary and theorist, the author notes that limited retreats by the Vietcong should be seen in long-range perspective, for these retreats amount to the government stabbing figuratively into "water, because when the sword has been withdrawn the water remains unchanged." The Maoist notion of Vietcong identification of its members with fishes surrounded by the water of a friendly peasantry is very much at the heart of North Vietnamese interpretation of current events.

VIETNAM: HOW WE GOT IN, HOW TO GET OUT. By DAVID SCHOENBRUN. (New York: Atheneum, 1968. 124 pages, \$2.95.)

THE FIRST VIETNAM CRISIS: CHINESE COMMUNIST STRATEGY AND UNITED STATES INVOLVEMENT, 1953-1954. By MELVIN GURTOV. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967. 165 pages, \$7.00.)

David Schoenbrun, correspondent, commentator and currently a professor at the Graduate School of International Affairs of Columbia University, has focused on a number of popular misconceptions inherent in the United States commitment to Vietnam, including a catalogue of reasons for United States intervention. He examines and supports the notion that the complex war in Vietnam was "... ill conceived from the start, that it is an unjust war, that it violates basic American traditions, principles, and our most cherished cultural heritage."

He quotes from the record of events in Vietnam from 1945 onward and suggests that this record is the product of innumerable miscalculations, distortions and misunderstandings by all the major forces in

volved in the Vietnamese War. More than this, he notes that the United States role was a result of foreign policy dilemmas from which it has not yet been able to extricate itself. By supporting the French democrats in their struggle against Communist forces in France, while being indifferent to French colonial policy in Vietnam, the United States became involved.

The historical background seems to be noncontroversial on this point. By 1950, the United States administration, already startled by the success of the Chinese Communists on mainland China, could hardly afford (especially in the highly charged atmosphere of the McCarthy period) to let "agents of international communism" triumph in Vietnam. Thus United States impartiality in an erstwhile colonial war changed almost abruptly to an American crusade in Southeast Asia. Second, the author recalls the much quoted and misconstrued Geneva Accords, the disputed matter of "free elections" in South Vietnam, and the rise to power of Ngo Dinh Diem. It was during the heyday of the Diem regime that the French began to leave Vietnam *en masse* and United States personnel took their places. This significant change was a result of important and domestic political considerations, including,

. . . the McCarthy charges of a global Communist conspiracy; it could have been political suicide for Eisenhower to appear to be appeasing the Communists. [Similarly, John Foster Dulles] . . . could not face the risk that the Democrats would accuse him of "giving Indochina to the Reds." Eisenhower therefore had to act, to give some evidence that he was not an appeaser.

However, it was during the Johnson administration, after the famous Pleiku and Gulf of Tonkin incidents, that an important turning point leading to massive American intervention in Vietnam was reached. The sending of large military forces, rather than individual advisers, was undertaken to bolster the faltering Saigon governments. These governments, in 1963-1964, were in constant danger of collapse and were in-

capable of fighting effectively the National Liberation Front (Vietcong). The dimensions of the war in Vietnam were drastically altered when "American boys" were sent to the Asian battlefield to "do the job."

Schoenbrun does not spare the various United States administrations for their hesitancy in extricating themselves from the conflict. He is a realist and a student of international politics and notes that the conditions for ending the war in Vietnam are bound to be highly complex. To this end, he discusses the viable alternatives to the continuing struggle. Such matters as peace talks among all of the belligerents, the stopping of United States bombing of North Vietnam, and the United States plans to phase out from the battle zones once a peace conference has dealt with the problem of self-determination in South Vietnam, all of these are important elements in a settlement if the conflict is to come to an end. Some of these contingencies have already come into existence and others will surely be talked about at the Paris negotiating table. For one reason or another, Schoenbrun does not mention the need for any of the parties to consult with Communist China in evolving a stable peace, and this is a particularly surprising omission, since Communist China looks upon Vietnam as the present focus of her confrontation with the United States.

An interesting and important supplement to the Schoenbrun thesis is the Gurtov book. More important, this book is actually a case study not of Vietnam *per se* but of United States policy *vis-à-vis* Vietnam and France, as it has evolved in a short span of time. *The First Vietnam Crisis* is a heavily footnoted account of United States diplomacy in 1953-1954, when assessments of Vietnam had neither been clearly nor publicly evolved. This was a period of policymaking in Washington when the United States did not appear to appreciate the political nature of peasant movements, Communist organizational methods in the rural areas of Southeast Asia, or the problems associated

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CURRENT DOCUMENTS

Statements on South Vietnam's Participation in the Paris Peace Talks

On November 26, 1968, United States President Lyndon Johnson and South Vietnam's President Nguyen Van Thieu authorized the simultaneous release of official statements setting forth the terms under which South Vietnam agreed to participate in the preliminary peace talks currently being held in Paris. The statements follow in full:

STATEMENT BY THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

This statement is designed to answer the questions which have been raised by the Government of the Republic of Viet-Nam about new meetings in Paris.

Prior to the President's announcement of October 31 of the stopping of bombing against North Viet-Nam, agreement had been reached in Paris between North Vietnamese and United States negotiators that a meeting to discuss a peaceful settlement in Viet-Nam should be convened in Paris.

During the earlier discussions with the North Vietnamese representatives, United States spokesmen made clear that the stopping of bombing and the holding of such a meeting would not be possible without agreed provision for the participation of the Republic of Viet-Nam as a separate delegation forming with the United States delegation one side of the meeting. United States negotiators made clear to Hanoi that it might bring on its side of the table any persons it wished.

The North Vietnamese representatives in Paris accepted this proposal and indicated that they would bring to the meeting members of the so-called National Liberation Front.

In the light of these facts the arrangements agreed to in Paris provide in essence for a two-sided meeting. Hanoi clearly understands that our side will be constituted as separate delegations of the Republic of Viet-Nam and the United States.

Whatever others may claim and however they may organize their side, the United States has not agreed and will not agree that the meeting is, or can correctly be described as, a four-sided or four-party conference.

Consistent with our view of the nature of the so-called National Liberation Front, we will regard

and treat all the persons on the other side of the table—whatever they might claim for themselves—as members of a single side, that of Hanoi, and for practical purposes as a single delegation.

In the discussions between the United States and North Vietnamese negotiators it was made clear throughout that, whomever Hanoi chose to bring on its side, the arrangement involved no element of recognition whatever. The United States Government has repeatedly made clear, publicly and privately, that it does not recognize either the National Liberation Front or the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam (North Viet-Nam). Concerning the so-called National Liberation Front in particular, the United States Government has at all times regarded it as a creation of North Viet-Nam and an agent of Hanoi's aggression against the Republic of Viet-Nam. The National Liberation Front is not in any sense a separate entity, much less a government.

Following the stopping of the bombing of North Viet-Nam, if Hanoi fulfills its repeated undertakings to enter into serious talks—undertakings repeated throughout the contacts between North Vietnamese and American representatives in Paris—the North Vietnamese delegation must talk directly and seriously with the Republic of Viet-Nam's delegation.

In the Paris meetings, the Republic of Viet-Nam delegation will play a leading role, as was explicitly affirmed in the Honolulu Communiqué of July. The Republic of Viet-Nam will take the lead and be the main spokesman on all matters which are of principal concern to South Viet-Nam.

The new Paris meetings will be expected to explore all avenues to end communist aggression against the Republic of Viet-Nam and to reach a peaceful settlement. They will start with a clean

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THAILAND'S ROLE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

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interested in them and working on their behalf. While they remain skeptical, a new relationship and a new momentum are building up in rural Thailand. This has been expressed in such new institutions as decentralized government, accelerated rural development, the program for "developing democracy" in the villages, and the village security force.

To deal with guerrilla attacks and armed propaganda meetings in northeast Thailand, the government has combined a civilian, police and military organization in rural areas. It has improved the intelligence on guerrillas so that they can be located, contained and dealt with quickly and effectively. This combined operation has aimed at separating the guerrillas in their sanctuaries from the people in the villages so that the pockets of insurgency will dry up for lack of food, information, and recruits. Where this process of separation has been effective and the village people have received many government benefits of protection and have seen villages developing with security, the incidents of insurgency and terrorism have visibly declined or even disappeared. But the terrorism of Meo tribesmen is a growing problem of a different kind.

Modernizing of Thailand's central core and knitting the outlying rural areas into this central core are probably turning out to be the most effective antidotes to synthetic insurgency. According to many businessmen and economists, Thailand's economic growth has put her in the first rank of developing countries and marks the smoothest advance witnessed in Southeast Asia in recent times. The economy looks basically sound, is growing rapidly, and will continue to benefit from a generally favorable outlook despite some weaknesses in domestic income and foreign trade. The growth rate has been 7 per cent for a decade. The annual per capita income has increased at about 4.5 per cent a year—to

about \$140. Most important, Thailand has the advantage of a group of young, well-trained, intelligent and progressive technicians and executives. Thailand has always been interested in trade, which accounts for her diplomacy of supporting a multiplicity of foreign relations and regional cooperation. Today, Thailand's free economy and predominantly rural population require a maximum of international trade to sell her agricultural products and provide foreign investment and production in consumer goods. Thus, Thailand's economy has served as a stable economic base in Southeast Asia. To meet growing problems of international trade and to put more emphasis on agricultural production to increase farm incomes, Thailand will probably place greater stress on regional economic cooperation in the decade ahead.

REGIONAL COOPERATION

With her continued economic growth, decrease of insurgency, and political confidence, Thailand has been able to take the lead in promoting regional initiatives and in helping to contain Communist expansion in Vietnam and Laos. From the point of view of security in Southeast Asia and the United States interest, Thailand's role has been particularly important and helpful in helping to prevent any single power or group of powers from dominating Southeast Asia.

Thus, the Thai government was willing to accept the United States request in 1965 to use and develop air bases in Thailand for conducting the air war against North Vietnam and in Laos, in accordance with the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization and related arrangements. It should be made clear, however, that this was an American initiative and not a Thai invitation. In addition, Thailand has been fielding a division of some 10,000 infantrymen to South Vietnam.

Outside Vietnam, in regional affairs, Thailand has been active in forming and encouraging the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Asian and Pacific Council (ASPAC), and the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education (SEAMES). In fact, Thailand's initiatives have been credited by

most observers as being mainly responsible for the conception and creation of these organizations. In addition, Thailand is very active in the Asian Development Bank, the Mekong Committee of the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East, the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization, and many specialized organizations of the United Nations which have their Asian headquarters in Bangkok. ASEAN—made up of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand—was established in mid-1967, but remained a non-military body.

At this stage, ASEAN remains a non-military body. Unfortunately, it has already been disturbed by disputes between the Philippines and Malaysia and between Singapore and Indonesia, but its members and supporters hope that the will toward regional cooperation may overcome these difficult bilateral conflicts. It is here that Thailand has demonstrated her special role in Southeast Asia and particular skill as conciliator and mediator. Thai leaders have been working very hard to resolve these disputes between Thailand's colleagues in ASEAN and to preserve the framework of this embryonic organization. Without some such indigeneous balance wheel as Thailand, there may be no chance of resolving these inevitable—if hopefully temporary—conflicts of interest and building an Asian structure.

But it is well to recognize at this stage that, for all these pieces of regional furniture, there is hardly yet a regional family or regional structure to go with them. The Thai conception and initiative, accordingly, form the motive power in the creation of a sense of regional identity and a structure of regional cooperation which might lead to more Asian power and less United States presence in Asia.

Noting a possible withdrawal of the United States from East Asia after the war in Vietnam, Thailand's Foreign Minister, Thanat Khoman, recently urged his Asian colleagues to organize themselves to "deal with Washington on more equal terms," envisaging the nations of the Southeast Asian and Pacific regions organized as "a cohesive and well-coordinated regional grouping or power base," which would be a better option than

"unilateral neutralization" by outside powers and politicians.

During and after a hoped-for compromise in Vietnam, Thai-United States relations and Thailand's role in Southeast Asia may become more difficult. Already the large number of Americans in Thailand and Thailand's virtual alliance with the United States are stimulating concern among some Thais, young and old, which echoes the resistance of Thais in centuries past to a visible over-present foreign element in their midst. The opening-up of a political dialogue, the activities of students, the emergence of labor as a social force, and the inevitable urbanization and disparities of income will add stresses. Not everything that happens in Thailand—like corruption, for instance—is acceptable or understandable to Americans, any more than unfair reporting about Thailand in the American press is acceptable or understandable to Thais. For this reason, the Thai-United States association will need careful handling and exceptionally attentive understanding on both sides if Thailand and the United States are mutually to encourage Asian solidarity without an excessive dependence on United States power.

The negotiations over Vietnam and Laos may already have revived Thai feelings of uncertainty about the future in Southeast Asia. There were serious doubts in 1961 over Laos. In 1968-1969, there are similar fears that the United States might write off the Vietnamese war and lose interest in Southeast Asia. To offset these fears, assurances will be needed to maintain the momentum of buoyancy which has been built up in many of the Southeast Asian countries. It would be tragic if in 1969 or in the early 1970's this heartening beginning were lost by Asian-United States misunderstanding. However, if the United States continues to work with Thailand and Indonesia and other countries in the area of economic and social development and leaves to them more and more of the initiatives of their security within their own regional family as they put it together, the structure of Asian power can be gradually increased and the spread of American presence in Southeast Asia can be decreased.

THE MANY-SIDED POLITICS OF SOUTH VIETNAM

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is no anti-Communist—or non-Communist—national political organization of any significance.

Instead there are several South Vietnams politically. Soldiers jockey for power with other soldiers; Buddhists and Catholics oppose one another as well as quarrel among themselves; the worlds of the city and the countryside are not only different but divided. The *Tet* offensive was somewhat counterproductive from the Communists' point of view, however, in that it encouraged a stronger anti-Communist commitment on the part of some Vietnamese. It probably also was a factor in encouraging the Thieu government to strengthen and improve itself. But it did not bring new political unity to the non-Communists.

The politics of South Vietnam today is many-sided. Unfortunately, there are many, not just two, Vietnams. Nor is there any reason to believe that this circumstance will suddenly change.

REBELLION OR SUBVERSION IN CAMBODIA?

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portant to point out that Cambodia is distinguished in Southeast Asia by an absence of major social grievances in the rural areas. There is limited peasant indebtedness, while the bulk of agricultural land is held by small-scale independent proprietors.

Since the end of 1963, the state has sought

¹⁵ See, for example, M. Jacques Decorney in *Le Monde* (Paris), February 2, 1968.

¹⁶ See *Le Sangkum*, August and September, 1968.

¹⁷ For a breakdown of the ethnic variety in Ratanakiri see *Kambuja*, March 15, 1968, pp. 44-5.

¹⁸ *B.B.C. Summary of World Broadcasts*, F.E./2860/A3/4. It is perhaps significant to note that the scale of insurgency would seem to be larger than in the northeast of Thailand. See J. L. S. Girling, "North-East Thailand: Tomorrow's Viet Nam?" *Foreign Affairs*, January, 1968, p. 396.

¹⁹ *Réalités Cambodgiennes*, February 16, 1968.

to exercise a complete monopoly in the buying of rice. It is possible that dissatisfaction at the price the government agency is willing to pay for rice compared to the financial gain to be made from smuggling across the South Vietnamese borders is of significance. It may also be true that in some regions peasants and townsfolk have been increasingly resentful of the government-sponsored voluntary manual labour programs, which smack too much of *corvée*, and the constant appeals for financial contributions for *Sangkum* projects, even though these are for public benefit. Finally, there may well be a growing reaction against the well-publicized practice of corruption in government and public service circles; this has been especially emphasized in leftist literature.

Prince Sihanouk has sought to counter the arguments of those who do not see any foreign hand in the Cambodian uprisings.¹⁵ The Prince has gone to great lengths to explain the absence of peasant grievance, and the role of Viet Minh zones along the Cardamome ranges, noting that the alleged peasant rebellion occurred just where the Viet Minh had placed its cells and arms caches.¹⁶

It would be profitable, at this juncture, to look at another and more concrete case of dissidence. In Ratanakiri province in the northeast, the Cambodian government has claimed that the various hill tribes,¹⁷ equipped with excellent weapons, are in fact secessionists in foreign pay.¹⁸ In the general region of the northeast there is the likelihood of outside and irredentist intervention; for example, in the Lao-peopled Siampang region of Stung Treng province. However, Prince Sihanouk himself offered a convincing explanation for the roots of dissidence in Ratanakiri, noting that the montagnard population seemed to be less interested in ideological struggles than in isolation. He admitted that they had opposed enforced regroupment which would permit them "to enjoy the social achievements which *Sangkum* offers."¹⁹ A key factor in understanding political behaviour in this region would seem to be montagnard resistance to threats to their traditional way of life. There might also be resentment of

government attempts to settle retired soldiers in this region. It is, of course, possible that tribal dissidence in the northeast is being encouraged by external forces.

While one can raise doubts about the question of foreign intervention in the Cambodian uprisings, the widespread acts of rebellion do not seem to be related entirely to rural issues. The uprisings appear to have urban associations, and political initiative appears to be centered in the capital. Why should this be so, apart from the financing presence of the Chinese Embassy? There can be little doubt that, in spite of the manifold modernizing achievements of the *Sangkum*, a malaise has affected a small but significant proportion of young Cambodians. While educational development, promoted in part by popular demand, has proceeded at a great pace, with the government giving it 20 per cent of its annual budget, it has run ahead of the absorptive capacity of the country. Thus young diploma-holders and contenders for such awards have a deep sense of frustration at the lack of status-job opportunity; they resent most of all that qualifications do not necessarily ensure promotion to positions of responsibility. In the context of other Southeast Asian countries it has been pointed out that

where there exists an underemployed, educated, politically conscious and highly nationalist youth disappointed in the progress of their own country and finding life frustrating and unrewarding, a great deal of anger can accumulate.²⁰

These words were written with special reference to Indonesia and the Philippines, but they are relevant to Cambodia. It has been possible to make a strong ideological appeal to a section of the youth of Cambodia who resent a style of national leadership which denies them political expression.

In the case of Cambodia, there is evidence of interference through the Chinese embassy, probably to consolidate a hold among students and a base in the countryside in case

²⁰ See editorial in *The Times* (London), October 26, 1968.

²¹ See Michael Leifer, "The Failure of Political Institutionalization in Cambodia," *Modern Asian Studies*, April, 1968.

Sihanouk tumbles from the tightrope of external and internal neutrality and the pieces are picked up by the rightist Army leadership. The advent of the Lon Nol government in October, 1966, appeared to herald such a prospect and so precipitated a directed rebellion in well-chosen areas. On the other hand, in urban areas and the countryside there is a situation capable of exploitation by those with the requisite skills and organization. There is certainly an intellectual sophistication among the radical left in the capital and there is most probably a complementary factor in parts of the countryside.

At this point in time, Cambodia is by no means aflame. The government gives the appearance of being in control, while the basis of effective rebel support would appear to be restricted. The rebels have an ability to create conditions of insecurity, but their prospect of success will depend (discounting external factors) not only on the exploitation of genuine grievance but also on an ability to identify with the nationalist cause for which Prince Sihanouk has been the most ardent and passionate advocate. This would seem unlikely.

The political practice of Sihanouk, in any case, is not beyond question,²¹ and he may fail to appreciate the relationship between social change and popular expectations and demands and the sense of frustration of those educated young men who oppose his personal style of government.

NORTH VIETNAM TODAY AND TOMORROW

(Continued from page 81)

tional Liberation Front and the Vietnam Alliance of National, Democratic and Peace Forces.

PARIS NEGOTIATIONS

This latter front had been especially established in April, 1968, with the peace negotiations in Paris in mind, to provide an umbrella under which all political elements in the South might cooperate in developing a coalition government. Such a coalition might include a "national" bourgeoisie represented by

men like General Duong Van Minh or Troung Dinh Dzu, "democratic" elements such as any non-Communist fellow-travelers, and "peace forces" such as the National Liberation Front (N.L.F.).

Such a basis for a coalition government was anticipated in a policy statement by the National Liberation Front which was transmitted to the United Nations Secretariat by the Rumanian delegation on December 14, 1967, in which the N.L.F. stated its objective

to set up a national union democratic government including the most representative persons among the various social strata, nationalities, religious communities, patriotic and democratic parties, patriotic personalities, and forces which have contributed to the cause of national liberation.

Under such a coalition government, with a newly-established Front separate from the National Liberation Front—the Vietnam Alliance of National, Democratic and Peace Forces—Vietnam could dominate mainland Southeast Asia, supported by China and the Soviet Union, upon both of whom North Vietnam's success depends.

What of South Vietnam? On November 2, 1968, the government of Nguyen Van Thieu recognized that its political life was at stake and refused to go to Paris with the National Liberation Front as an equal, a status which would prejudice its legitimacy. On November 12, United States Secretary of Defense Clark Clifford reflected the eagerness of the Lyndon Johnson administration to end the war when he hinted that negotiations at Paris would move ahead with or without Saigon representation. In view of President-elect Richard Nixon's statement the previous day that "if progress is to be made . . . it can only be made if the parties on the other side realize that the current administration is setting forth policies that will be carried forward by the next administration," it would seem that the eagerness of the Johnson administration to settle the war is shared by the Nixon administration.

On November 26, the Thieu government announced the end of the boycott of the peace talks. North Vietnam can be expected to

exploit the United States eagerness to end the war to the disadvantage of South Vietnam.

THE MALAYSIAN POLITICAL GAME

(Continued from page 105)

and it is this group that still poses some of the major problems for Malaysia.

To Tunku Abdul Rahman, Prime Minister of Malaya and Malaysia almost continually since independence, must go credit for holding the elite together. For without the Tunku (as he is usually called), the Alliance would probably have broken up long ago. His attributes are many and are seldom found combined in a single politician. His intuitive grasp of the crucial values on which each community cannot compromise, his almost theatrical sense of timing, his ability to find acceptable compromises, and the ease with which he can move from kampong mosque to the European cocktail party—all of these qualities have made the Tunku the apparently indispensable man in Malaysia politics. It is true that he also has a remarkable knack for putting his foot into his mouth, but in the long run this seemingly unconscious candor has furthered the myth that surrounds him.

Tunku Abdul Rahman is not the most astute of Malaysia's political leaders. Economics confuses him; cause and effect often seem mixed up to him; and he believes books are for entertainment, not enlightenment. Most of the intellectual drive in Malaysian politics stems from Deputy Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak, a British-educated Malay (Lincoln's Inn) from the administrative tradition, whose hard-headed policies must often be explained in more acceptable terms by the Tunku before being relentlessly implemented by the Deputy Prime Minister. Together Razak and the Tunku have provided Malaysia with a combination of expressive and instrumental leadership rare enough even in the developed world.

It is true that the Tunku is aging⁷ and that both he and Razak have outspoken critics, but they still present a formidable team. Tun

⁷ Tunku Abdul Rahman is 65. Tun Razak is 46.

Razak is the heir-apparent to the prime ministership, but one gets the feeling that the Tunku repeats the incantation naming Razak so frequently perhaps because he senses the difficulties Razak will face in gaining widespread acceptance.

THE FUTURE

Malaysia faces an uncertain future both within and without her borders. At home she faces the classic dilemmas of all states, but in Malaysia these dilemmas are presented in starker and more dramatic form. It is well understood that the logical extreme of individual liberty is anarchy; of social order, totalitarianism.

Malaysian leaders have formulated and enforced laws that guarantee freedom of speech and assembly but set well-defined limits to these basic freedoms. In the enforcement of these laws, the least freedom has been enjoyed when an individual's actions are connected with communalism or communism, for in the eyes of the Alliance leadership these are the two areas where political movements might be dedicated to bringing down the present system itself. Thus, in Malaysia, there are political detainees, there are persons whose civil rights have been abridged by law in return for freedom from political detention, and there is a mass-media network that understands and accepts the legal and informal limits of dissent imposed upon it and seldom ventures beyond these limits.

Malaysian government may fall far short of the democratic ideal, but it is difficult not to sympathize with the dilemmas faced by its leadership. The Alliance leadership probably genuinely feels that it is attempting to lead Malaysia toward a more perfect democracy, but at least one troubling question remains. Can a guided democracy be guided toward

⁸ The British will complete their withdrawal from Malaysia and Singapore by 1971. This action will be far more costly in economic terms to Singapore than to Malaysia.

⁹ Troops sympathetic to President Sukarno's increasingly pro-Communist policies attempted to seize control of the Army. They arrested six leading generals, who were murdered during the coup. The main force of the Army, under General (now President) Suharto, regained control. See *Current History*, January, 1967, pp. 22ff.

the democratic ideal, or will human nature—the reluctance to give up the power one enjoys—thwart even the most noble aims? Experience elsewhere suggests the latter, but perhaps Malaysia will be an exception to the general rule.

In the area of foreign relations, Malaysia's leaders can exert considerably less control over their destiny. The British decision to disengage militarily east of Suez was an event beyond the control of Malaysia, despite the fact that Malaysia will feel the consequences of this decision for many years to come.⁸ The GESTAPU affair⁹ in Indonesia on the night of September 30, 1965, triggered a political crisis and its aftermath ushered in a new era in Indonesian foreign policy. Policies toward Malaysia began to change almost immediately, and in return Malaysian policy also was reoriented. Yet Malaysia had nothing whatever to do with these abrupt political somersaults in Indonesia and, in fact, Malaysia was caught as unaware as any other state. Even the Sabah claim is more connected with Philippine than with Malaysian domestic politics. Malaysian leaders have sometimes been abrupt and unthinking about Sabah (often after considerable provocation), but relations could improve almost overnight if the claim could be quietly dropped from the Philippine domestic political arena.

There are many significant changes going on both inside and outside Malaysia. Malaysia has always been basically committed to the West ideologically, despite her good economic relations with the U.S.S.R. in recent years. Yet much of this commitment can be attributed to the personal preferences of her elite and to an environment around Malaysia's borders generally hospitable to Western influence (Thailand, the Philippines and, at times, Indonesia). There is a new generation of leadership emerging, however, and this generation is likely to demand a more honestly neutral foreign policy. With less certainty, we might also predict domestic policies permitting less latitude for the entrepreneur, more emphasis on government support to improve the lot of the indigenous people and an increasing tendency to look toward Indonesia.

PARIS PEACE TALKS

(Continued from page 109)

slate. The sole agreements that have been reached in the earlier Paris talks between North Vietnamese and United States representatives have concerned the stopping of bombing and the convening of a new meeting. The United States considers that there cannot be productive talks in an atmosphere where the cities are being shelled and the DMZ is being abused.

In the new meetings the United States Government will operate in the closest cooperation with the Republic of Viet-Nam, and in continuing consultation with the nations that have contributed military forces to the defense of South Viet-Nam.

The substantive position of the United States Government will be based on respect for the sovereignty of the Republic of Viet-Nam, and on the joint communiques of Manila and Honolulu. In particular, there has been no change whatever, and will be no change, in the position of the United States Government toward a so-called coalition in South Viet-Nam. The United States does not believe aggression should be rewarded and will not recognize any form of government that is not freely chosen through democratic and legal process by the people of South Viet-Nam. The imposition of any coalition government would be in conflict with this principle.

STATEMENT BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIET-NAM

In its constant search for peace, the Government of the Republic of Viet-Nam has been discussing with the United States Government during the past weeks the ground rules and arrangements for the new meetings in Paris which would enable the Government of the Republic of Viet-Nam to send its delegation to Paris to engage in direct and serious talks with the Hanoi Delegation, toward the ending of communist aggression and the establishment of a just, secure, and guaranteed peace in Viet-Nam.

As a result of these discussions the United States Government has submitted to the Government of the Republic of Viet-Nam a statement. By mutual agreement, that statement is being made public in both Saigon and Washington at this time.

In that statement, we find that the major points in the message of the President of the Republic before the Joint Session of the National Assembly on November 2nd, and the two-side formula proposed by the Government of the Republic of Viet-Nam on November 8th, have been given satisfaction in their essential aspects.

The sovereignty of the Republic of Viet-Nam has been respected.

The Governments of the other allied nations have been consulted and wholeheartedly support the agreements achieved through the close cooperation between the United States Government and the Government of the Republic of Viet-Nam.

Once again, the solidarity between the Government of the Republic of Viet-Nam and allied governments has been eloquently demonstrated in the face of the intransigent attitude of North Viet-Nam and its auxiliary forces.

Therefore, the Government of the Republic of Viet-Nam decides that it is prepared to participate in the new talks in Paris with the Hanoi Delegation to show the good will of the Republic of Viet-Nam and to test the good faith of Hanoi.

BOOK REVIEWS

(Continued from page 108)

with dealing with indigenous nationalist movements. Consequently, diplomacy was guided by inadequate information "from the field." These matters and many others are mentioned in a book invaluable to students of United States executive decision-making. The author speculates that the tenor of the policy in Southeast Asia comes down to ". . . a serious question of principle, one with long-range implications, [arising] over the Administration's determination that 'holding the line' . . . constituted the only real choice of American policy."

NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT

(Continued from page 87)

Tay Ninh jungles by North Vietnamese General Nguyen Van Vinh:

Whether or not we will resume fighting after the conclusion of agreements depends on the balance of forces. If we are capable of dominating the adversary, war will not break out again. And the converse also holds true.

That means that unless there is a settlement on Communist terms in Vietnam, there will be no settlement at all.

The Month In Review

A CURRENT HISTORY chronology covering the most important events of December, 1968, to provide a day-by-day summary of world affairs.

INTERNATIONAL

African Nations

Dec. 10—It is reported that the Union of Central African States (uniting the former Belgian Congo with the Central African Republic and Chad) in effect has been dissolved. Yesterday, the President of the Central African Republic, General Jean-Bedel Bokassa, announced the end of his association with the group.

European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom)

Dec. 21—The ministers of the member states of Euratom—France, West Germany, Luxembourg, Italy, Belgium, and the Netherlands—approve a compromise budget for Euratom. France wanted to reduce the budget by more than half while her 5 partners wanted to keep the agency effective.

European Economic Community (Common Market)

Dec. 17—Speaking at a news conference, Jean Rey, head of the E.E.C. Executive Commission, expresses hope that British membership in the E.E.C. may yet be approved.

International Monetary Crisis

Dec. 6—In London, the price of the pound falls to its effective floor level of \$2.3825 for the first time since currency exchange markets reopened on November 25. The German mark becomes the object of speculation as it is bought up by investors.

Middle East Crisis

(See also *U.S., Foreign Policy*)

Dec. 1—An Israeli Army spokesman reports that Israeli commandos advanced 37 miles into Jordan and destroyed 2 bridges to re-

taliate against Arab harassment.

Dec. 2—In an address broadcast throughout the Arab world, U.A.R. President Gamal Abdel Nasser declares that the Egyptian people must wait for the right moment to rise up against the Israelis, but that he will accept an honorable peace settlement.

Jordanian and Israeli troops engage in a heavy artillery battle that ends with an Israeli air attack against Irbid.

Dec. 3—Israeli spokesmen report that Jordanians fired on at least 10 Israeli settlements during a 3-hour pre-dawn battle.

Israeli planes strike along the Jordan Valley frontier to end a second major artillery duel.

Dec. 4—Israeli bombers strike against Iraqi positions in northern Jordan in retaliation for Iraqi border shelling against Israeli positions.

Dec. 5—On a fact-finding mission for U.S. President-elect Richard Nixon, William W. Scranton arrives in Cairo.

U.N. Secretary General U Thant calls in representatives of Jordan and Israel to transmit his concern over the flare-up in the Middle East.

Jordanian Premier Bahjat-al-Talhouni tells the Parliament that King Hussein has sent 5 messages to Arab leaders in Saudi Arabia, the U.A.R., Iran, Kuwait and Lebanon asking them to work out a plan for unified action to liberate Arab lands occupied by Israel.

Dec. 10—Israeli and U.A.R. planes clash at the southern tip of the Sinai Peninsula.

Dec. 24—A Soviet-U.A.R. joint communiqué is issued as Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko flies back to Moscow after talks with U.A.R. President Gamal Abdel Nasser.

Dec. 26—Two Arab terrorists attack an Israeli jetliner at the Athens airport; one machine-guns the plane and the other hurls

a grenade setting the plane on fire. One passenger is killed.

Israeli Transportation Minister Moshe Carmel warns that Israel will not permit Arab airliners to fly safely while her planes are imperiled. He charges that members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, which claims to have been responsible for the attack, train in Lebanon and that the government of Lebanon must bear "responsibility for acts of sabotage organized on Lebanese soil with Governmental encouragement."

Dec. 28—An Israeli task force, using helicopters, attacks the Beirut International Airport, owned by the Lebanese government, to retaliate for the December 26 attack on the Israeli airliner in Athens. Several aircraft are destroyed.

The New York Times reports that Egyptian diplomats have disclosed that a U.A.R. plan for an amphibious attack on the Israeli-occupied Sinai Peninsula led to the visit from Gromyko to try to discourage such an attempt.

Dec. 29—The U.N. Security Council meets at the request of Israel and Lebanon. Soviet and U.S. representatives denounce the Israeli reprisal act against Lebanon.

United Nations

Dec. 3—The 126-member Economic Committee of the General Assembly votes to suspend South Africa from the U.N. Conference on Trade and Development. Such action is reported to be unconstitutional under the U.N. Charter. The full Assembly must approve the resolution.

Dec. 5—It is reported that the British government has sent a note to U.N. Secretary General U Thant protesting Spanish measures to intimidate Gibraltarians and to impair Gibraltar's economy.

Dec. 10—The U.N. Security Council votes to maintain the peacekeeping force in Cyprus for another 6 months.

Dec. 13—The General Assembly votes 55-33 (with 28 abstentions) against a resolution to oust South Africa from the U.N. Conference on Trade and Development.

The General Assembly adopts a resolution calling on the 11-nation U.N. Council for South West Africa to continue its operations; it asks the Security Council to act to remove South African officials from South West Africa.

Dec. 18—U.S. President-elect Richard Nixon calls on U.N. Secretary General U Thant and promises to support the U.N.

The General Assembly votes approval of a resolution urging the end of the British administration of Gibraltar by October 1, 1969.

Dec. 20—The General Assembly approves a measure asking that all nuclear testing be halted.

Dec. 21—General Assembly President Emilio Arenales address the concluding session of the 23rd General Assembly. One of the final acts of the Assembly was the adoption of Russian as a "working" language of the U.N.

Dec. 31—Voting unanimously, the Security Council condemns Israel's "premeditated military action" in attacking the Beirut International Airport December 28.

War in Vietnam

Dec. 2—Cyrus Vance, acting head of the U.S. mission to the Paris peace talks, and Ha Van Lau, second-ranking member of North Vietnam's delegation, confer on expanding the talks to include the National Liberation Front and Saigon.

Dec. 6—It is reported that last night enemy guns shelled cities and military installations in South Vietnam.

It is reported that North Vietnam and the U.S. have reached agreement on several procedural issues connected with the expanded Paris talks.

The South Vietnamese Supreme Court rules in favor of the House of Representatives' demand that a joint session of the 2 legislative houses vote on participation at the Paris peace talks.

Dec. 7—In a special joint session, the Senate and House of Representatives approve South Vietnam's decision to send a delegation to Paris.

Saigon's delegation to the peace talks leaves for Paris; Vice-President Nguyen Cao Ky will head an advisory group to assist the negotiators. The 5-man working team will be headed by Pham Dang Lam.

Dec. 10—U.S. Defense Secretary Clark M. Clifford, at a Defense Department news conference, voices his hope that a U.S.-North Vietnamese troop cutback in South Vietnam can be arranged before January 20, 1969, when U.S. President-elect Nixon takes office.

Dec. 12—The U.S. command in Vietnam announces that American combat deaths in Vietnam have mounted to over 30,000.

Dec. 14—In Paris, the N.L.F. announces that the new head of its delegation, Tran Buu Kiem, will arrive on December 16.

Dec. 16—The U.S. releases 7 North Vietnamese civilian seamen held in South Vietnam for over a year.

Dec. 19—Cyrus Vance, deputy head of the U.S. delegation to the Paris peace talks, warns Colonel Ha Van Lau of the North Vietnamese delegation that an attack on Saigon will impede the Paris peace talks.

Dec. 22—Vice-President Ky returns to Saigon for consultations.

In a 7-hour battle, North Vietnamese troops try to seize a U.S. base 42 miles northwest of Saigon; 81 enemy soldiers are killed.

Dec. 25—Allied military officials charge that the Vietcong have violated the 72-hour unilaterally-declared ceasefire 8 times. The allied Christmas ceasefire will last only 24 hours.

U.S. and N.L.F. delegates meet to discuss the release of 3 U.S. prisoners being held by the N.L.F. in South Vietnam.

Dec. 26—Tran Hoi Nam, a spokesman for the N.L.F. delegation and acting on behalf of Hanoi's delegation to the Paris talks, declares at a news conference that the U.S. and Saigon must agree to hold talks at a "round" table.

Dec. 27—In Saigon, government spokesmen confirm that at least one-third of South Vietnam's staff at the Paris talks have been dismissed.

Dec. 30—The Hanoi radio broadcasts a Pathet Lao charge that between 4 and 5 times as many bombs are being dropped by U.S. planes in eastern Laos, under Communist control, than were dropped before the November 1, 1968, bombing halt. The Ho Chi Minh trail, through which supplies for enemy forces in South Vietnam are sent, runs through eastern Laos.

ARGENTINA

Dec. 6—It is reported from Buenos Aires that Argentine liberals are fearful about increasing police controls and increasing police abuses, together with a decline in judicial authority.

Dec. 18—The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development announces an \$82-billion, 25-year loan to Argentina for a hydro-electric project, including a dam on the Limay River to generate power for Buenos Aires beginning in mid-1973.

Dec. 24—A 21-month wage freeze is ended as the Argentine government authorizes an 8 per cent salary increase as well as raises in minimum wages and family allowances. With the fringe benefits, the government expects the average income to increase 11 per cent. The government granted the increases as a result of a rise in the gross national product of 4 per cent.

BOLIVIA

Dec. 21—The government of President René Barrientos Ortuño grants full amnesty to students arrested or exiled for political reasons.

BRAZIL

Dec. 7—President Artur da Costa e Silva vetoes a bill restricting the sale of land to all foreigners and banning such sales to foreigners who are not residents of Brazil. Although the bill had been proposed by the administration, the President states that amendments added by Congress would harm the national interest.

Dec. 8—The National Monetary Council again devalues the cruzeiro, setting the new rate, starting tomorrow, ranging from 3.805

to 3.83 to the dollar. This is the second adjustment of the rate within 3 weeks.

Dec. 12—The Brazilian Chamber of Deputies resists government pressure and refuses to permit the trial of an opposition deputy, Marcio Moreira Alves, on charges of having offended the army. Members of the ruling Arena party join the opposition Brazilian Democratic movement in voting to rebuff the government. The vote is 216 against permitting the trial, 141 in favor and 12 abstentions.

Dec. 13—President Costa e Silva orders a recess of Congress and assumes emergency powers.

Dec. 14—The Brazilian Congress recesses in accord with the Presidential order without setting a date for its return. It is reported that many political figures are being held for questioning.

Dec. 16—It is reported that hundreds of persons were jailed yesterday following the establishment of one-man rule by President Costa e Silva. Military censorship has been imposed on the dispatches of foreign correspondents and on the national press.

In a radio address to the nation, President Costa e Silva defends his government against attacks by the church, the press and the politicians.

Dec. 17—The government reveals that it has made about 200 arrests since the President assumed practically unlimited power. Official government spokesman Fernando Galvão acknowledges that among those arrested are former President Juscelino Kubitschek and Carlos Lacerda, former governor of Guanabara. In another statement, the government announces it has set up a commission headed by Antonio Gama e Silva, the Minister of Justice, to investigate what it terms the riches acquired by former public officials.

Dec. 18—The regime of President Costa e Silva issues a decree, dated yesterday, authorizing the seizure of "illicit" property and other holdings by Brazilians.

Dec. 19—President Costa e Silva issues several decrees dealing with taxes and customs control.

The Ministry of Finance announces that it has eliminated 5,256 jobs.

Dec. 20—The military regime of President Costa e Silva eases the complete censorship it imposed when it took power. Military censors are removed from cable offices handling press telegrams, and from broadcasting stations and some newspapers.

Dec. 23—The military regime arrests Alberto Dines, editor of *Jornal do Brasil*, Rio de Janeiro's leading newspaper, after he speaks out against the censorship which has practically eliminated news from Brazil's press.

Dec. 25—Dines is released.

CAMBODIA

Dec. 20—Eleven American servicemen, captured when they strayed into Cambodian territory from South Vietnam July 17, 1968, are released by the Cambodian government. All are reported to be in good health and to have been treated fairly.

CHILE

Dec. 3—At least 20 students and 70 policemen are injured in Santiago when police using tear gas and nightsticks clash with student demonstrators.

CHINA, PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF (Communist)

Dec. 8—Articles in *Jenmin Jih Pao*, official Communist party newspaper, report the formation of propaganda teams of factory workers to spread the teachings of Chairman Mao Tse-tung in schools, factories, hospitals and government agencies.

Dec. 11—*Jenmin Jih Pao* reports that the management of primary and secondary schools is being turned over to factories so that vocational and political training will be emphasized.

Dec. 27—The U.S. Atomic Energy Commission announces that China has set off a 3-megaton nuclear blast at its Lop Nor testing area in Sinkiang Province. This is China's first successful test of a thermonuclear (hydrogen) device.

COLOMBIA

Dec. 1—It is reported that President Carlos Lleras Restrepo, by holding the resignations of 13 of his Cabinet members which he demanded on November 29, is seeking to strengthen his campaign for reform of the constitution. The President, who is a Liberal, demanded the resignation of 13 Conservative members of his Cabinet who had voted against provisions of his proposed constitutional reforms including a measure that would reapportion Congress and freeze its membership at 113 senators and 196 representatives. Another provision of the 80 articles in the President's bill which faces strong opposition would increase Government control over the handling of funds allocated to the congressmen's home departments.

Dec. 16—President Lleras Restrepo ends the state of siege under which the country has been ruled for 42 months. He acts during a ceremony recessing Congress for a 3-month vacation.

COSTA RICA

Dec. 3—Costa Rica closes her border with Panama because of border incidents between guerrilla followers of Dr. Arnulfo Arias, ousted President of Panama, and Panamanian National Guardsmen.

CUBA

Dec. 14—It is reported that Premier Fidel Castro's government is intensifying its efforts at "massively incorporating" women into the labor force. On December 11, a commission was appointed to mobilize women for work in the sugar industry. Large-scale employment of women in the sugar mills was made possible by a Labor Ministry ruling of last month that 11 types of jobs in the sugar mills are open to women.

Dec. 16—The government announces it will turn over to the revolutionary courts 5 Cuban exiles from Miami seized after they landed with weapons on the northern coast on December 2.

Dec. 29—The Havana Radio announces that

Cuba and Switzerland have signed a trade pact for 1969.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Dec. 5—It is reported that the Czechoslovak Communist party has removed Petr Colotka from his post as chairman of the Government Press and Information Office. Colotka, a Deputy Premier, protested the publication of *Zpravy*, a Soviet daily, published by occupation officers in the Czech language.

Dec. 7—Communist party First Secretary Alexander Dubcek leads a delegation of Czechoslovak officials to Kiev, capital of the Ukrainian S.S.R., to meet with high-ranking Soviet officials.

Dec. 12—The Czechoslovak economy is in serious condition, according to a report from Premier Oldrich Cernik to the Communist Party Central Committee. Worsening of the already bad state of the economy is blamed in part on the Soviet-led invasion.

Dec. 13—A plan for the creation of a federal government for Czechoslovakia is adopted by the Central Committee of the Communist party. The new government will take the form of a Czech-Slovak federation, and will come into official existence on January 1, 1969.

Dec. 15—It is announced that Oldrich Cernik will be the Premier of the federated Czech-Slovak Republic.

Dec. 20—Under the new federal system, which will be formed by the Czech Socialist Republic and the Slovak Socialist Republic on Jan. 1, 1969, each Republic will have a National Council. Leader of the new Czech National Council will be Stanislav Razl, the present Minister of Chemical Industries for Czechoslovakia.

Dec. 21—Dubcek warns party officials in Bratislava that continued gestures of defiance by students and workers will necessitate "undemocratic measures" of suppression.

Dec. 22—A new economic aid agreement aimed at helping the ailing Czechoslovak economy is signed by the Soviet Union and

the Czechoslovak government. The new agreement will link the 2 economies more closely.

Dec. 29—The resignation of the government is offered by Premier Cernik to President Ludvik Svoboda as a preliminary to the establishment of the new Czech-Slovak Federation. Cernik is asked to continue in office until the new government is formally named.

ECUADOR

Dec. 4—It is reported that last night President Velasco Ibarra appointed a Cabinet reflecting most shades of political opinion, only a few hours after his previous Cabinet resigned because of the Liberal party's withdrawal of support from the President's 3-month-old administration.

Dec. 16—It is reported that development of a potentially lucrative oil find in the Ecuadorian jungles by Gulf-Texaco is being delayed; the government is reluctant to accept some of the terms regulating oil extraction by foreign companies.

FRANCE

Dec. 5—Workers in the Renault automobile factories stage a 4-hour strike to protest government decisions to restrict wage increases.

Dec. 10—The Finance Ministry announces that the nation's trade deficit for November, 1968, totaled \$200 million. This is the worst deficit in several years, and is attributed to wage inflation following the general strike in the spring of 1968.

Dec. 12—Nanterre University is the scene of student strikes over police attempts to question students about recent disorders.

GERMANY, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF (East)

Dec. 13—The East German press agency, A.D.N., reports that the 1969 armaments budget will be \$125 million higher than last year. The defense budget amounts to 9.8 per cent of the total budget.

GERMANY, FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF (West)

Dec. 10—Talks open between Soviet and West German transport officials on the establishment of air service between Moscow and Frankfurt am Main.

GREECE

Dec. 11—The Greek government announces that the new constitution adopted November 15, 1968, makes the Regent, the Premier and the Cabinet the rulers of Greece. The military council no longer holds ruling power.

Dec. 14—The armed forces are freed from political control as the chief of the armed forces is given all control over military matters except for the determination of defense policy and the appointment of top military leadership.

GUYANA

Dec. 1—An official source says that former Prime Minister Cheddi B. Jagan, leader of the left-wing People's Progressive party, and his wife, Janet, the party's general secretary, will be questioned in connection with an alleged plot to overthrow the government of Prime Minister Forbes Burnham.

Dec. 2—Mrs. Jagan denies her husband has been arrested.

Dec. 6—Jagan is interviewed by a reporter in Georgetown and says he is leaving tomorrow to campaign in the Essequibo area.

Dec. 7—U.S. Ambassador Delmar Carlson formally turns over a 45-mile highway and an air terminal building at Atkinson Airport to the government of Guyana. The U.S. provided most of the \$1.2 million for construction of the highway and the terminal building.

Dec. 12—It is reported that yesterday the director and the editor of Guyana's only afternoon newspaper were charged with public mischief by the government of Prime Minister Forbes Burnham for having criticized the machinery for the coming election.

Dec. 15—It is reported that last night Brind-

ley Benn, a former Deputy Prime Minister, announced the formation of Guyana's first Communist party which has been named the Working People's Vanguard party. Benn called upon Jagan and Peter D'Aguiar, a leader of the United Force party, to boycott the elections scheduled for December 16, "since all decent people realize that the election was rigged with United States help."

Dec. 16—Elections for a new National Assembly, and, consequently, a new government, proceed quietly.

Dec. 17—It appears the moderate government of Prime Minister Burnham, backed by United States financial assistance, has defeated its Marxist-oriented opposition in the national elections.

Dec. 18—Cheddi B. Jagan, leader of the opposition party defeated in the December 16 elections, threatens to bring down the regime that he contends has won by fraud.

HONDURAS

Dec. 12—It is reported that the government has authorized a \$15-million bond issue to help finance the National Agrarian Institute programs for settling people on land, furnishing credit and technical facilities in an effort to attack Honduras' major economic problem—a large agrarian population living at subsistence levels. The government intends to apply for a loan of \$7.4-million from the Inter-American Development Bank for the programs.

INDIA

Dec. 9—Haryana State in northern India faces the second political crisis in 2 years as the Congress party is defeated in the State Assembly elections. The central government is expected to suspend the Assembly and to take over the administration.

ISRAEL

(See *Intl, Middle East*)

ITALY

Dec. 3—A wave of strikes by students and workers sweeps across Italy following the

fatal shooting of two strikers by police in Sicily.

Dec. 4—Transport workers strike in protest over economic conditions.

Dec. 7—Premier Mariano Rumor wins agreement on his proposed program from center and left-wing parties, assuring a comfortable majority coalition in the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies.

Dec. 12—Rumor names a new Cabinet, ending 23 days of government crisis.

JAPAN

Dec. 23—Foreign Minister Kiichi Aichi and Director General of the Defense Agency Kiichi Arita welcome the U.S. decision to return, relocate or share military bases used by the U.S. armed forces in Japan. The move is expected to ease relations between the 2 governments.

JORDAN

(See also *Intl, Middle East*)

Dec. 26—King Hussein reshuffles his Cabinet, dropping 3 members who had supported terrorist attacks against Israel and naming 8 new members loyal to the King.

KOREA

(See *U.S., Foreign Policy*)

LEBANON

(See *Intl, Middle East*)

MEXICO

(See also *U.S., Foreign Policy*)

Dec. 3—In Merida, 3 students are shot and 9 buses destroyed before policemen and federal troops intervene in a battle between students and bus owners. The students had seized the buses in a protest against fare rises.

Dec. 4—The National Student Strike Council officially ends Mexico's 4-month-old student strike.

Dec. 15—Four persons are injured when a home-made bomb explodes in the Mexican Labor Conference headquarters, the second such explosion in 24 hours. Yesterday a bomb damaged the headquarters of the

ruling Institutional Revolutionary party.
Dec. 24—President Gustavo Díaz Ordaz orders the release of 121 persons arrested during 4 months of student strikes.

NICARAGUA

Dec. 11—It is reported that the President of Nicaragua, Major General Anastasio Somoza Debayle, has dismissed the Minister of the Economy and a sizeable number of his employees, as well as officials in the Department of Municipal Services, the Ministry of Public Health and in the Plans and Projects Division of the Ministry of Public Works.

NIGERIA

(See also *U.S., Foreign Policy*)

Dec. 20—A 2-day Christmas truce is ordered by Major-General Yakubu Gowon, leader of the federal Nigerian government.
Dec. 23—Lieutenant-Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu says his secessionist state of Biafra will observe an 8-day truce at Christmas.

PAKISTAN

Dec. 1—The government announces that a number of reforms demanded by students in past weeks will be granted.
Dec. 4—President Mohammad Ayub Khan announces that he will not hold political discussions with opposition leaders.
Dec. 7—Demonstrators shouting slogans against the government of Ayub are fired on by police in Dacca, East Pakistan. One demonstrator is killed.
Dec. 13—Police fire again on East Pakistani demonstrators, causing 2 deaths.

PANAMA

Dec. 14—The military junta closes the University of Panama on the grounds that the campus has been the scene of constant strikes for trivial reasons.

Canal Zone

Dec. 6—The first Soviet-flag passenger ship to use the Panama Canal moves northward through the waterway with 500 Australian tourists aboard.

PHILIPPINES

Dec. 13—An agreement to restore diplomatic relations is announced by Malaysia and the Philippines. The countries agree not to discuss their dispute over the state of Sabah for a year.

PORTUGAL

(See also *Zambia*)

Dec. 4—Electoral reform legislation is sent to the National Assembly. Woman suffrage is proposed; literacy is still required of all voters.
Dec. 17—Mario Soares, who returned recently from 8 months in exile because of his political opposition to former Premier Antonio de Oliveira Salazar, announces the formation of a new political movement to urge liberalization of the government.

SINGAPORE

Dec. 3—Finance Minister Goh Keng Swee announces plans for increased military strength over a 10-year period. Great Britain will withdraw her military forces from the area in 1971, and Singapore will increase her military power to fill the gap.

SOUTH YEMEN

Dec. 9—*The New York Times* reports that last week the National Front for the Liberation of the Arabian Gulf opened an office in Aden; it is dedicated to overthrowing the sheiks of the Persian Gulf states and eliminating all British influence.

U.S.S.R.

Dec. 10—A moderate increase in defense spending is announced. The sum for arms spending, however, is a slightly smaller percentage of total spending than it has been in the past 3 years.
Dec. 12—Some 15 ships are withdrawn from the Soviet naval fleet in the Mediterranean. About 35 ships remain, while the U.S. has about 50 naval vessels in the area.
Dec. 31—The Soviet press agency *Tass* announces that the Soviet supersonic airliner, the TU-144, made a successful flight today, the first flight of a supersonic airliner.

UNITED STATES

Agriculture

Dec. 11—Secretary of Agriculture Orville L. Freeman announces a revision of the department's formula for figuring food expenses for Americans in the lowest income brackets. Beginning in February, 1969, Americans with the lowest income—about 500,000 persons—will receive at least \$10 more monthly in food stamps for the same amount of money they now pay. All families with incomes of no more than \$70 monthly will benefit.

Civil Rights

Dec. 4—The Office of Civil Rights of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare makes public an order dated October 14 giving the board of education of Union, New Jersey, until December 14 to approve a plan to correct racial imbalance in compliance with the 1964 Civil Rights Act. This is the first school desegregation order issued by the federal government to a Northern school system under the 1964 act. Middletown, Ohio, also receives such an order.

Economy

Dec. 11—The Labor Department reports a record low unemployment rate of 3.3 per cent—the lowest level in 3 years.

Dec. 17—The Federal Reserve Board raises its discount rate to 5.5 per cent from 5.25 per cent “in furtherance of a policy of restraint” on the economic boom.

Incoming Secretary of the Treasury David M. Kennedy avoids a direct response to questions about his position on maintaining the price of gold at \$35 an ounce, saying “I want to keep every option open.”

Dec. 18—Ronald Ziegler, President-elect Richard Nixon's press aide, says that no change in Nixon's position on maintaining the price of gold has been discussed.

Led by the First National City Bank of New York, major banks across the nation raise their minimum interest rates on business loans to a record high of 6.75 per cent.

Dec. 19—President Lyndon Johnson says that the federal budget for the 1969 fiscal year is expected to show a small surplus, largely because of the tax increase and the federal expenditure control bill passed by the 90th Congress in June, 1968, plus the economy's inflationary boom. The 1968 fiscal year budget deficit was \$25.4 billion.

Dec. 31—The New Haven Railroad is taken over by the Penn Central railroad system, after a 5-year legal battle.

Foreign Policy

(See also *Intl, Middle East Crisis, War in Vietnam; Nigeria*)

Dec. 4—The State Department warns Israel and Jordan that violations of the cease-fire line endanger efforts to agree to a peace settlement in the Middle East.

Dec. 5—Iranian Premier Amir Abbas Hoveida arrives for a 2-day official visit to talk with President Johnson.

Dec. 6—It is reported in Washington that the U.S. has told the U.S.S.R. it is ready to begin long-delayed talks on the limitation and reduction of strategic missiles.

Dec. 9—Former Pennsylvania Governor William Scranton, serving as Nixon's special envoy to the Middle East, tells newsmen in the Israeli-occupied west bank territory that he thinks U.S. policy in the region should be “more evenhanded” than it has been.

Dec. 11—Nixon's press aide, Ronald Ziegler, says that Scranton's views on the Middle East are his own: “His remarks are Scranton remarks, not Nixon remarks.”

Dec. 13—President Johnson and Mexico's President Gustavo Díaz Ordaz mark the settlement of a border dispute dating back to 1864; a dynamite blast shifts the Rio Grande into a new concrete-lined channel marking a new boundary.

The State Department announces a new fishing agreement with the U.S.S.R. to cover a 2-year period through December 31, 1970, aimed to conserve scup, fluke, red hake and silver hake.

Dec. 14—In Washington, Administration officials are reported to believe that the

Russians prefer to postpone talks on reduction of missiles until Nixon takes office; no response has been made by the Russians to the U.S. offer reportedly made November 25 to begin the talks.

Dec. 20—The U.S. State Department announces that the U.S. has told the Soviet Union that it has lifted the suspension of official cultural exchanges between the 2 nations imposed in the wake of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia.

Dec. 21—President-elect Richard Nixon names retired career diplomat, Charles W. Yost, as chief U.S. representative to the U.N.

Dec. 22—The 82 surviving crew members of the U.S. espionage ship *Pueblo* are released by North Korea, after the U.S. deliberately signs what it terms at the signing as a false confession. The *Pueblo* crewmen have been held captive since January 23, 1968.

Dec. 27—The U.S. announces that it will sell 50 Phantom F-4 jets to Israel starting delivery late in 1969.

The U.S. announces that it is giving 8 C-97 G Strato-freighter cargo planes for relief efforts for starving Biafran victims of the Nigerian civil war.

Dec. 28—U.S. officials reveal that *Pueblo* Commander Lloyd Bucher has said that he signed a false confession that the *Pueblo* was on an espionage mission because the North Koreans threatened to shoot every member of the *Pueblo* crew in ascending order of age.

Government

Dec. 1—Without comment, the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence releases an account of the violence that occurred during the National Democratic Convention in Chicago in August, 1968. The account was prepared by a 212-man study team operating under contract to the national commission and headed by Chicago lawyer Daniel Walker; it concludes that Chicago police responded to rioters in Chicago with "what can only be called a police riot."

Dec. 2—President-elect Richard Nixon names Harvard Professor Henry A. Kissinger as his adviser in defense policies and European affairs and as his assistant for national security affairs.

Dec. 3—Nixon names the president of the California Institute of Technology, Lee A. DuBridge, as his science adviser.

Dec. 9—The Department of Justice announces that it has concluded that available evidence of misuse of public funds by Congressman Adam Clayton Powell is insufficient to justify criminal prosecution.

Dec. 11—Nixon names his new Cabinet. Appointees include: Secretary of State, William P. Rogers; Secretary of Defense, Melvin R. Laird; Secretary of the Treasury, David M. Kennedy; Attorney General, John N. Mitchell; Postmaster General, Winton M. Blount; Secretary of the Interior, Walter J. Hickel; Secretary of Agriculture, Clifford M. Hardin; Secretary of Commerce, Maurice H. Stans; Secretary of Labor, George P. Shultz; Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, Robert H. Finch; Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, George Romney; Secretary of Transportation, John A. Volpe. Sociologist Daniel P. Moynihan is to head a new Council on Urban Affairs, with Cabinet rank. Robert P. Mayo, banker, is named director of the Bureau of the Budget.

Nixon reveals that he will name Washington's Mayor Walter Washington for a second term.

Dec. 12—Nixon confers with President Johnson at the White House in a 90-minute meeting.

Dec. 16—The 538 presidential electors cast official ballots for the President and Vice President; these will be mailed to the Senate and officially opened at a joint session of Congress on January 6. One of North Carolina's electors has announced that he will disregard party discipline and vote for George Wallace instead of Richard Nixon, contrary to his instructions. Nixon is to receive 301 electoral votes; Vice President Hubert Humphrey, 191; George Wallace, former governor of Alabama, 46.

The Department of Agriculture discloses that more than 700 meat packing and processing plants have been closed during the first year of enforcing the new wholesome meat law.

Dec. 17—The Interstate Commerce Commission announces that it has elected Virginia Mae Brown, a West Virginia lawyer, as chairman. Mrs. Brown will be the first woman ever to head an independent federal administrative agency.

Vice-President-elect Spiro Agnew says he will resign as Governor of Maryland effective at noon January 7, 1969.

Dec. 19—President Johnson authorizes expansion of U.S. air service across the Pacific, giving new routes to Trans World, Pan American, Continental and Northwest Airlines.

Dec. 23—A vacancy in the U.S. Senate caused by the death of Senator E. L. Bartlett (D., Alaska) is filled by Theodore F. Stevens, a Republican. Stevens is appointed to serve until a special election in 1970. He is named by Alaska's Governor Walter J. Hickel, who will become Secretary of the Interior in the Nixon Cabinet.

President Johnson names Joseph W. Barr to serve a brief term as Secretary of the Treasury, replacing Henry H. Fowler, who resigned December 20. Barr will serve until the Nixon Administration takes over on January 20, 1969.

Dec. 28—The National Education Association's Research division reports that federal aid to local elementary and secondary schools declined in the 1968-1969 school year for the first time since 1942. In the current year, the anticipated \$2.45 billion total in federal aid is \$19.2 million less than the amount received in the preceding year.

Dec. 30—Defense Secretary-designate Melvin Laird names industrialist David Packard to be Deputy Secretary of Defense in the Nixon Administration.

Massachusetts Senator Edward Kennedy announces that he will challenge Louisiana Senator Russell B. Long for the post of assistant Democratic leader in the Senate.

Dec. 31—Attorney General of Massachusetts

Elliot L. Richardson is chosen to become Under Secretary of State by Secretary of State-designate William P. Rogers.

Labor

Dec. 23—After a week-long strike of New York City's fuel oil deliverers, a settlement is reached.

Dec. 27—Under the provisions of the Railway Labor Act, President Johnson names a fact-finding board to inquire into the threatened strike against the Long Island Railway by the Brotherhood of Railroad trainmen. His action delays the strike for 60 days.

Military

Dec. 6—An Army announcement reveals plans to demobilize 20,000 National Guardsmen and reservists by the end of 1969; draft calls are expected to be raised to some 3,000 men monthly from March through July, 1969, to replace the guardsmen and reservists.

Politics

(See also *Government*)

Dec. 10—Results of a Gallup Poll show that some 15 million eligible voters failed to vote in the 1968 presidential election.

Dec. 11—Complete official election returns show that President-elect Richard Nixon received 31,770,237 popular votes for the Presidency; Vice President Hubert Humphrey received 31,270,533; former Alabama Governor George Wallace received 9,906,141. A record number of votes—73,186,819—were cast.

Race Relations

(See also *Civil Rights*)

Dec. 2—New York State's Education Commissioner James E. Allen orders Junior High School 271 in the Ocean Hill-Brownsville section of Brooklyn closed in the wake of new disorders. (See *Current History, U.S., Labor*, January, 1969, p. 63.)

Dec. 16—New York State names a new acting trustee for the Ocean Hill-Brownsville schools; Rhody A. McCoy is subsequently reinstated as administrator of the district.

Dec. 18—Junior High School 271 in the Ocean Hill-Brownsville section of Brooklyn, New York, reopens without incident.

Science and Space

Dec. 7—A \$75-million spacecraft observatory, the most sophisticated and expensive unmanned satellite yet developed by the U.S., is launched at Cape Kennedy, Florida. The satellite is expected to orbit 489 miles above earth, above the distorting influence of earth's atmosphere, focusing 11 telescopes on thousands of stars that cannot be seen clearly from earth.

Dec. 21—Three American astronauts in Apollo 8 are launched for man's first journey around the moon.

Dec. 23—The astronauts aboard Apollo 8 relay television pictures of earth taken from their spacecraft, more than 180,000 nautical miles from earth.

Dec. 27—Apollo 8 with the 3 astronauts aboard makes a nearly perfect landing in the Pacific Ocean, after orbiting the moon 10 times.

Supreme Court

Dec. 3—in a unprecedented television appearance, Justice Hugo Black declares that Chief Justice Earl Warren's 1955 decision ordering the desegregation of the nation's public schools impeded the process of desegregation because the Chief Justice ordered the action accomplished "with all deliberate speed," a reservation that was interpreted by the states as allowing long delay.

Dec. 4—President-elect Richard Nixon reveals that Chief Justice Warren will remain in office until the end of the Court's term in June, 1969.

Territories

Puerto Rico

Dec. 28—Luis Muñoz Marín, founder of the

Popular Democratic party, which has dominated Puerto Rican politics for over 30 years, announces he is stepping aside to make way for "young people, new faces." He will give up all positions of leadership in the party, but will retain his seat in the Senate.

VENEZUELA

Dec. 1—The nation votes for the presidency and all elective seats in the National Senate, Chamber of Deputies, state legislative assemblies and local municipal councils in an atmosphere of tranquility.

Dec. 9—Rafael Caldera of the Christian Democratic party is declared the winner in a close presidential election by the Supreme Electoral Council. He defeats Gonzalo Barrios of the ruling Democratic Action party by a close margin.

Dec. 19—Army troops are called back into Caracas for the first time since the election on December 1 following 2 guerrilla attacks in nearby villages.

VIETNAM, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF (North)

(See *Intl. War in Vietnam*)

VIETNAM, REPUBLIC OF (South)

(See *Intl. War in Vietnam*)

ZAMBIA

Dec. 2—Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda protests against a raid by Portuguese planes yesterday on a village in southeast Zambia, to retaliate against anti-Portuguese guerrilla activity staged from bases in Zambia.

Dec. 19—The first post-independence general election is held.

Dec. 20—It is reported that Kaunda has been reelected. His United National Independence party won a majority in the 105-member National Assembly.

Dec. 21—Kaunda is sworn in.

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